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Saturday Review of Literature

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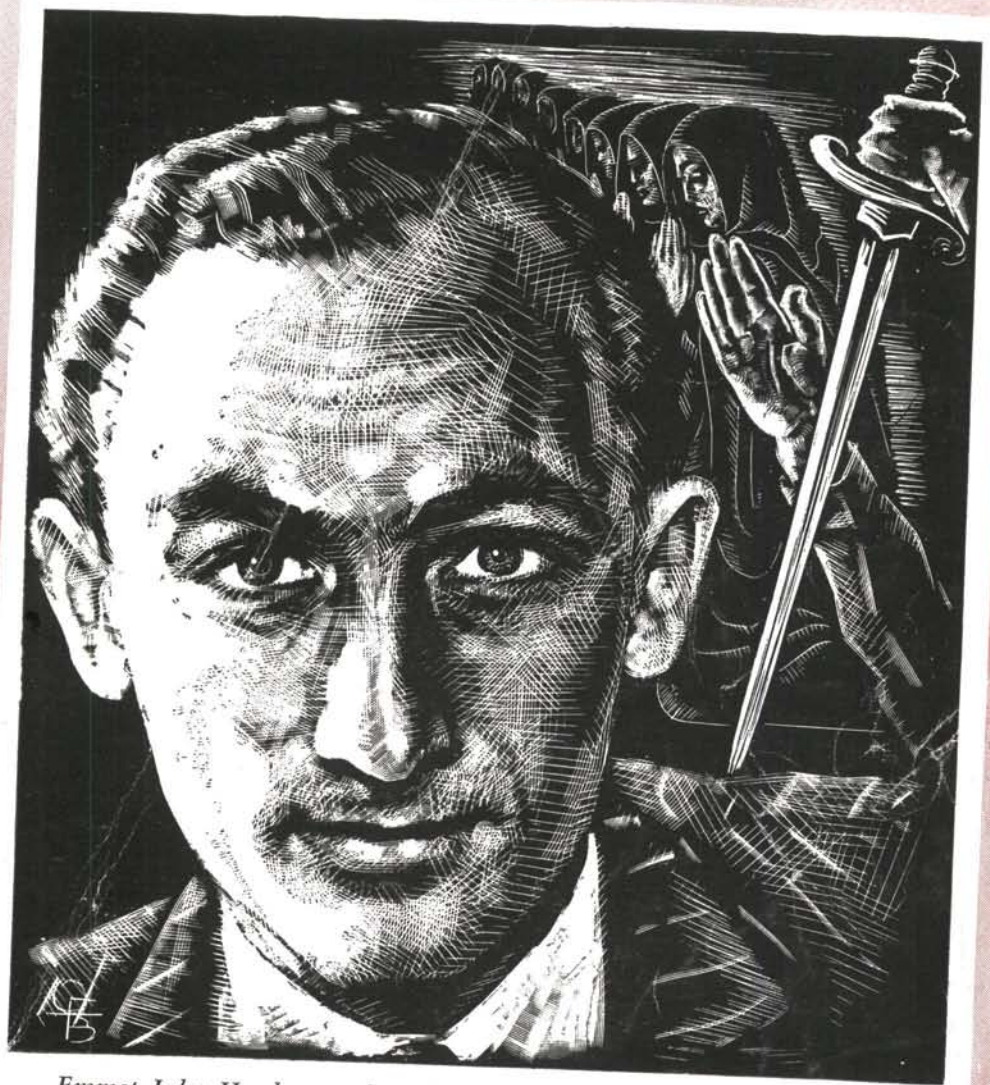

Emmet John Hughes, author of "Report from Spain." *(See page 13)*

The Perfect Trifler

By LOUIS KRONENBERGER

Booked for Travel

A NEW FEATURE

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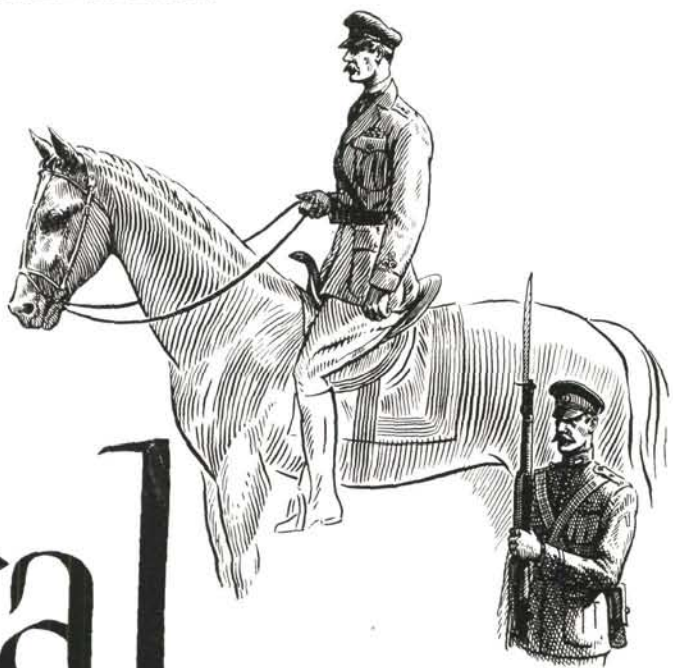
The General (as Colonel Blimp) is always with us. It took World War II and the recent months to make C. S. Forester's novel, THE GENERAL, of immediate interest

"Eleven years ago I read THE GENERAL. Since then, Forester has written the now classic Hornblower series. I still consider THE GENERAL his finest and most important novel."

—*CLIFTON FADIMAN*



The General

By C. S. FORESTER

This powerful and satiric story tells how Sir Herbert Curzon, professional soldier of meager talents, suddenly shot to dizzy heights of command; how he made love; how he dared much with his own and other men's lives; how he hid behind his strength as a general, ever fearful of discovery of his weakness as a man.

"It's a great book, devastating in its dead-pan exposure of the sort of soldier that makes armies repellent to so many other soldiers; and I hope with all my heart that book buyers, for their own good, will know enough to give it the circulation it deserves."

—KENNETH ROBERTS

"When Forester's THE GENERAL first came out I not only read it but started a sort of one-man cheering section for it. THE GENERAL should have been required reading for all General Staffs and all general publics."

—BRUCE LANCASTER

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TRADE Winds

A PUBLISHER'S NOTE BOOK

RINEHART'S TWO BIG GUNS — Fred Wakeman and Charles Jackson—will be blazing away again for the fall list. Wakeman's new novel, "The Saxon Charm," is a story of show business, its central character reputedly patterned on the life of the talented but baffling producer Jed Harris. The same gent was the inspiration for a Ben Hecht novel some years ago. Jackson's latest, tentatively labeled simply "A Murder Story," is a complete departure for him. In Hollywood for a few days to discuss plans for making "The Fall of Valor" acceptable to the Hays office, Jackson casually outlined the plot of his new book at a small dinner, sold it the following morning to MGM for something like $200,000. . . . Speaking of Hollywood, Enterprise has persuaded Nancy Mitford, author of "Pursuit of Love," to come over from Paris to portray one of her own character creations in the forthcoming film production. And Irwin Shaw, sturdily rejecting one fabulous picture assignment after another, is working to finish his first novel. Present length of manuscript: 1,100 pages. Title: "The Killing Mart." . . . Harcourt, Brace performed a miracle of its own to get copies of Valentine Davies's "Miracle on 34th Street" into New York shops in time to coincide with the opening of the picture at the Roxy. It's a honey of a story. Country-wide publication will come late in July. . . .

TRADE WINDS'S favorite running mate, John Mason Brown, is the hero of a dexterous and heartwarming profile by Allen Churchill in the June *Cosmopolitan*. Hailing him without qualification as "the most popular women's club lecturer in the United States," Churchill reveals that when an aunt heard how much John earned each year on the podium, she exclaimed in wonderment, "You don't mean to say that a Brown is being paid for talking!" . . . "When Brown presided at the *SRL* dinner in honor of Bernard Shaw," relates Churchill, "one of the speakers was Howard Lewis, president of Dodd, Mead, Shaw's American publishers. 'Mr. Lewis,' cracked Brown, 'is here by the grace of Dodd.' Lewis cited the dates and current prices of numerous Shaw first editions. As he finished, Brown rose slowly and said, 'Now that we have heard the commercial. . . .'" If John ever writes his autobiography, he threatens to call it "John Brown's Body." . . . Meanwhile, he thinks the title of "The Blue Hen's Chickens" should be changed to "Sumner Is Icumen In." . . . When Mr. Sumner moved against the McHugh volume, incidentally, it had achieved the staggering national sale of 882 copies. In the following three weeks it sold only 498 more. Mr. Sumner's advertising value isn't what it used to be. . . .

LIPPINCOTT, WINNER by a mile of this year's Ad Club award for the campaign on "The Egg and I," now refers to its phenomenal best seller as "the pullet-surprise winner." . . . Film rights to the actual Pulitzer novel winner, "All the King's Men," were sold to Columbia by Maxwell Geffen of *Omnibook*, who shrewdly sewed them up while everybody in Hollywood was looking the other way. According to Sid Skolsky, Orson Welles was asked who he thought could play the leading role. Welles replied, "Well, my second choice would be James Cagney." . . .

JEAN FAIR MITCHELL is co-author of a four-volume set, "Curso Moderno de Ingles," for the teaching of English to Spanish-speaking peoples, which Macmillan will publish in the late summer. She is also the new headmistress of the famous Brearley School for Girls in New York. Her predecessor at Brearley, Mrs. Millicent McIntosh, becomes dean of Barnard upon the retirement of Virginia Gildersleeve.

Dean Gildersleeve once precipitated a crisis in my own life. Years ago, when I was an editor of the Columbia *Spectator*, Dean Gildersleeve posted a stern edict to the effect that no Columbia vulgarian was to be admitted to an annual hokus-pokus called "The Greek Games," wherein comely and thinly-clad Barnard freshmen and sophomores cavorted as charioteers, gladiators, Arabian steeds, and goddesses, and in general made fools of themselves, for the edification of mystified parents and instructresses. Through the friendly offices of a lovely maid named Marie, I was smuggled into one of these frolics, watched appreciatively while she pranced about in a flimsy and revealing wisp of purple gauze (she was playing the part of the ancient watchman of the sacred temple), and rushed back to the *Spectator* office to bang out a blow-by-blow description of the goings-on for the next morning's edition.

I thought my piece was reasonably funny. Dean Gildersleeve, unfortunately, did not. She came charging over to the *Spectator* office and delivered an address that shook the residence of Prexy Nicholas Murray Butler several blocks away. For a brief spell, my college career trembled in the balance. I was saved by

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"From where I sit"

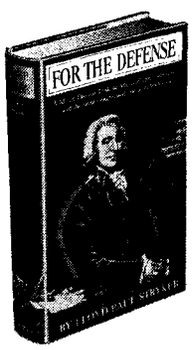
THERE should be many good reviews (and there have already been two as I write this) of **For The Defense,** LLOYD PAUL STRYKER's sparkling and scholarly biography of Thomas Erskine.

This fine book looks like the kind of stuff that appeared on bookshelves before the war, a fine fat tome, documented, illustrated, indexed, the kind of book that makes you think you look intelligent when you hold it in your lap.

Here is set forth the dazzling career of the great liberal of his times, the times of Garrick, Sheridan, Beau Brummel, Pitt The Younger. It is set forth by MR. STRYKER with a pen only a fellow lawyer could move so solidly and with such understanding for his man, his subject, and the ramifications of thought which link them.

I hope you will read the reviews of this book, for they can set forth in much greater detail than this meagre space allows, the brilliant cavalcade of cases that made legal and English history. Erskine rose from poverty to become the foremost figure of the English bar, the powerful pleader for Paine, the dreaded adversary of Pitt, prominent in the trial of Queen Caroline, and the savior of Admiral Keppel in a case curiously reminiscent of Pearl Harbor.

STRYKER writes with a simplicity of style and clearness of expression whose every word is put there for the specific purpose of intelligible communication. And the result is a relief from the usual dilution of the multiple adjective. His sheerness of speech recalls his own dramatic intensity in the courtroom, an intensity brought to this book as only a great lawyer can bring it. To put it simply, this book is a natural.



paul

DOUBLEDAY 50th Anniversary

the late Dean Hawkes, who persuaded Miss Gildersleeve that nobody read *Spectator* anyhow.

My next meeting with Dean Gildersleeve was purely accidental. I was ushered to a seat in a theatre, and found myself directly beside her. I must have trembled slightly and turned green, because she suddenly declared, "Relax! I'm not going to eat you! As a matter of fact, I sent a copy of your ridiculous piece to a friend in Chicago."

The following Monday, *Spectator* began a thrilling series entitled "Great Women of Barnard." The first piece was about Dean Virginia Gildersleeve. . . .

VIKING'S BIG BOOK for the fall will be Lion Feuchtwanger's new novel, "Proud Destiny," the Literary Guild selection for October. . . . Putnam's expect big things of Robert Wilder's "Bright Feather," an historical romance about the Seminole Indians in his native state of Florida. . . . Natalie Scott's "The Story of Mrs. Murphy" shapes up as Dutton's biggest hit in years. . . . Harper's is readying a new collection of Robert Benchley's pieces under the title of "Benchley — Or Else," and a book about our foreign policy—or lack of it—by James F. Byrnes, to be called "Speaking Frankly." . . . Wolcott Gibbs supplied the title for the new Charles Addams cartoon album: "Addams and Evil." . . . Clip Boutell is now the editor of the Fiction Book Club. . . . All three prize winners in the *New York Herald Tribune's* Children's Spring Book Festival bore the Viking imprint—one more feather in the cap of juvenile editor May Massee (as though she needed it!) . . . And speaking of clean sweeps, S. and S. have been riding high, wide, and handsome with the number-one bestsellers in fiction ("Gentleman's Agreement"), non-fiction ("Peace of Mind") and juvenilia ("The Golden Egg Book"). . . . It was Professor Irwin Edman who first sang the praises of another S. and S. best-seller, "Aurora Dawn." "In fact," said Max Schuster, "he was the catalytic agent." "Exactly what is a catalytic agent?" asked an editor of the Columbia University Press. Schuster pondered a moment and explained, "A catalytic agent is one who doesn't receive ten per cent." . . .

S. ERIC BERGH, the Swedish publisher, likes America so much he plans to stay here. He has formed a new literary agency with George J. Winner (at 545 Fifth Ave.), will establish branches in London and on the West Coast. Special consultants will be Carl Carmer and Martin Flavin. . . . At a party at the Ambassador, in honor of Bergh and Winner, a portly authoress boasted that her husband always took care of her at literary jamborees. "How do you keep him glued to your side?" she was asked. "Witches' brew and mysterious potions," she explained coyly. It was at this point somebody noticed that her husband had disappeared completely. Three days later the authoress was still looking for him. . . .

HARRY SALPETER, writer and critic, has opened an art gallery at 128 East 56th Street, New York. "I am going to show and sell paintings by living American artists," he declares. "I do not aspire to wear the mantle of Stieglitz, but I shall try to achieve his general purpose in my own way, so that the name of this gallery will deserve to be linked with Stieglitz's '291,' which was a true seed-bed of art. I hope to give hospitality on my walls to new and promising American talent." . . . Another art-lover, Louis Kronenberger, of *Time* and *PM*, visited the home of a brand-new, black-market millionaire. The furnishings were ornate and expensive; the only thing missing was pictures on the walls. "I suppose," hazarded Kronenberger, "that you're going to acquire some old masters." "I should say not," said the hostess. "If we've got to spend all that money for pictures, we're going to get *ourselves* painted."

BENNETT CERF.

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—*Lewis Gannett*

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RETURN TO NIGHT

By Mary Renault

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SWASKILTOWOT

WHEN the Selective Service Board greeted us with that barefaced lie about our friends and neighbors, they neglected to tell us how to keep our sanity while in the service. "The discipline will be good for you," they said—not realizing what they meant nor how wisely they spoke.

Although everyone told us the Navy was the better deal, we entered the Army because all the carrot juice in our home county would never have brought our left eye up to Naval standards. We even put in our pocket the rational way of thinking that had taken us some thirty-odd years to acquire, and adjusted ourselves to a logic of unreason in which what happens is as little a matter of thought as a pair of dice give to the way they fall.

The Army, never above recognizing a bargain in brains, made us an enlisted cog in a super-duper branch of its intelligence service. Because of our discipline in unreason, we made such sense as could be made out of the following items of sample intelligence·

-----A major in charge of opening subversive cases opened one on an envelope bearing the letters SWASKILTOWOT. "Subversive code, very subversive," he mumbled to himself, as he classified it Top Secret. Any enlisted man in the Restricted category could have told him that it meant: "Sealed With A Sweet Kiss; I Love The One Who Opens This."

-----A lieutenant colonel (having been promoted, of course) opened another case on a tin badge such as a child might wear, found in the street and bearing the initials RLOLOA. The badge went through official channels to Washington and the answer came back: "It has been determined that RLOLOA stands for 'Radio Listeners Of Little Orphan Annie.' "

-----Much later, while we were in OCS (housed in pyramidal tents under a row of lovely pine trees) our then-lord-and-master said: "The major he sez he don't wanna see no pine needles on the ground."

-----After the war, 320 expensive and much-traveled mules (having flown the Hump twice), listed at $250 each, were sold through error for 78¢ apiece. (Full colonel, this time. Basic deficiency: the three R's.)

When Lew Conarroe's OFF MY SEA CHEST came our way, it was straight down our GI scupper. We couldn't decide which of the twenty chapters was our favorite because our preference changed from day to day. One day it might be *Cumshaw* or *Tattoos and Gold Lace;* the next day it was just as apt to be *You Are Cordially Invited* or *R.H.I.P.* (Rank Has Its Privileges).

The chapter entitled *A Lesson in Bookkeeping, USN* is our favorite today because we have just had a little lesson in postwar indebtedness—who owes what to whom—being in receipt of a dun for $21.50 from the Retained Accounts Division, Army Finance Center, Office of the Chief of Finance, Building 204, St. Louis 20, Missouri. We have already sent the check. We could have argued with them and cleared up the point, but following orders is less complicated—even in peace. A check for $21.50, which we can ill afford, works less of a hardship on us than the burden (for paper and postage alone) that would be inflicted on generations of taxpayers yet unborn. There was the added consideration that they might have stuffed the whole business back into that computer of theirs and what would have come out the second time might just as likely have been $5210—or a long string of digits beginning with 9.

Many months—and a whole series of irrationalities—after we had become disciplined to the logic of unreason, a review in the pony edition of *Time* brought to us, on the other side of the earth, a few lines from Robert Frost's *A Masque of Reason* (Henry Holt and Company, 1945) that said it so expertly, so rationally, they stuck in our memory:

> the discipline man needed most
> Was to learn his submission to unreason,
> And that for man's sake as well as mine,
> So he won't find it hard to take his orders
> From his inferiors in intelligence
> In peace and war—especially in war

We would suggest that, come Atom War I, the Selective Service Boards give each inductee a card bearing the Frost quotation—and cut out that guff about our friends and neighbors. We would suggest further that the inductee be forced to memorize the quotation along with his General Orders.

Meanwhile, in our present civilian job, whenever we feel in danger of losing our sense of wonder or of humor or of pity, we think of SWASKILTOWOT or RLOLOA. (Bless their little hearts.) Sometimes we just think about the mules or the pine needles. If these fail to turn the trick, we read another chapter of that brave and wonderful and lovely book by Lew Conarroe — and we end up laughing about the gallons and gallons of carrot juice we were too disenchanted to drink, even before the Army got hold of us.

Formerly, we wasted breath relating objectively to some of our more benighted civilian friends what went on in the name of fighting the war. They would stare at us with disbelief as though we were liars or had lost our reason. From now on we shall merely hand them a copy of the book that is bound to become a favorite of unbenighted civilians everywhere — not to mention 12,000,000 servicemen.

Did we remember to say it is funny?

OFF MY SEA CHEST
by LEWIS H. CONARROE
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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Perfect Trifler

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

WE SHALL shortly celebrate a notable occasion: Sir Max Beerbohm's seventy-fifth birthday. But a not unnotable one is already at hand: Sir Max's first book in nearly twenty years. And if one would survey the career of a distinguished writer, a book, I think, provides a sounder starting point than a birthday. To find oneself criticized in the very act of being congratulated must be a pretty dampening experience—much as though a writer should discover, on opening a beautifully wrapped birthday present, that someone had sent him a grammar.

The new book,* furthermore, though it unfortunately does not crown Sir Max's career, considerably illuminates it. It reveals, quite as much as anything he has ever written, the kind of writer he is, and the kind of man. Indeed, it pretty sharply reveals that he is seventy-five. This is not because it shows an old man's infirmities, but because it overflows with an old man's recollections, an old man's harking back to the loves and landmarks of his youth. Max,† God knows, has never not been a period writer. But always, in reading him before, one felt not so much a gulf between past and present as that Max had made time stand still—that Victoria, or at any rate Edward VII, had not ceased to reign, and world wars not been fought or waistcoats changed fashion. Max was still, somehow, a dandy of the Nineties, a worldling of the Nineteen-Hundreds; reading him, we saw him framed eternally against a background of fin-de-siècle Piccadilly, as Keats's youth is young forever on his Grecian urn. When, in an essay on Strachey a year or two back, Max protested—with as much fervor as an urban Tory would permit himself—against the Century of the Common Man, what surprised you was not that he saw red at (and in) the phrase, but that he should ever have heard of it. He had seemed out of earshot of it by at least a generation.

But now we find that Max has not been living, placidly oblivious of the present, in a fin-de-siècle dream. He is too constantly jarred by the present not to be most uncomfortably aware of it. All the things Max loves—elegance, urbanity, a quill-pen leisureliness, the pleasure to be had of little things, the noiseless flick and delayed smart of irony—are not much valued in our day. All the things he hates—noise, speed, garishness, ugliness, Americanization—are ubiquitous and, as he might say, regnant. Again and again he can only shudder at what he sees, and sigh for what has vanished. But the sigh is really far more significant than the shudder. For one feels it is not so much that the present is all wrong for Sir Max—though of course it is—as that the past is all-important. Each of his complaints is fundamentally a comparison. One suspects that Max was already retrospective in his cradle, and downright reminiscent in his crib. And now Max is really, however ironically, the elderly gentleman who sits in his Tory club-window shaking his head at everything he observes in the street. Very often he is soundly protesting against vulgarity; but surely sometimes he is protesting against life. Yet this is not just Max turned elderly—he has always been someone who preferred a way of life to life itself.

—*Bohun Lynch.*

"One suspects that Max [Beerbohm] was already retrospective in his cradle and downright reminiscent in his crib."

ON THE literary side, "Mainly on the Air" is pretty slight, even for its author; much of it having been composed, as the book's title indicates, for BBC broadcasts. Yet I have found a second reading of the book more satisfying than a first: one starts off keenly disappointed because so little comes even close to Max's best; then gratefully accepts these pieces for what they are—still rather bright, still unmistakably Beerbohm. Their very titles supply their text—"London Revisited," "Music Halls of My Youth," "The Top Hat," "Advertisements," "Speed." But the best thing in the book, the thing most in the old, happy, essayist vein is "Fenestralia," where Max considers the role that windows have played in literature and history. It is a true carved cherrystone, and not from a sour cherry. Possibly the next best thing in the book, the amusing "T. Fenning Dodsworth," is not quite a stranger; it was published, in this country at least, as part of "A Variety of Things." But we may look upon it, surely, as one more link with the past.

And the past is most of all the Nineties. The Nineties stamped Max and sent him forth as their most engaging ambassador. It does not matter in the end that what Max wrote in the Nineties is very far from his best work. It is simply that as the

*MAINLY ON THE AIR. By Max Beerbohm. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1947. 142 pp. $2.

† *Alone among writers, he was universally referred to by his first name. Yet the "Max" never denoted familiarity or even, primarily, affection; it was a kind of badge of his uniqueness. One referred to him by his first name much as one does to a king—which may be why it now comes hard to demote him to a knight.*

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child of esthetic dandyism he never —however often he chose to treat it with a smile—ceased to cling to it. It was his achievement to commemorate an attitude by lightly mocking it, and to emerge from a period of much ill-fated trifling as the perfect trifler.

"THE perfect trifler" may seem a slighting way to describe the man who has conceivably written the finest familiar essays in the English language. But I think the phrase fairly suggests, on the most honorable terms, the scale of Sir Max's work and its quite unregrettable lack of "significance." For it does lack significance, in the sense that Peacock and Congreve, not to speak of Rabelais or Molière, possess it. Max—though he once confessed himself "no book lover" — is palpably, impenitently bookish. Very likely, as he has often declared, he turns to books only when he is unable to be with people. It does not matter. Sir Max is as literary as a quotation from Horace. It is never life itself, only the cultivated, the artistic, the aristocratic life, that he savors or satirizes; and when he savors it is not to make converts, any more than when he satirizes it is really to protest. His work exists simply to give pleasure of the most delicate kind—simply to distil all that we mean by temperament into something characterized by all that we mean by style.

His sheer spoofing aside, most of Sir Max's work may be summed up as the manipulation of a personality. He began manipulating it when it was not yet formed, and when his style, whatever its merits, was still a little absurd. He began impudently; not with the callow impudence of youth, but as a precocious and sort of parthenogenic man of the world. The art that reveals art came before its most celebrated opposite, if indeed the opposite ever quite came at all; the fun in Max lies not in wondering about his dexterity but in watching it. He is acrobat, not conjurer. At the start, however, he was not entirely deft: in "The Works" and "More" the cleverness is fatiguing, the personality obtrusive, the matter quite often thin. (Even something successful like "Diminuendo" or "An Infamous Brigade" is rather a jeu d'esprit than a true essay.) Just as Maltby, in "Seven Men," sat up all night breaking in his new suits in rotation, so was Max, much earlier, breaking in his mannerisms and effects.

What is cardinal to the manipulation of a personality is a completely expressive style; and that, despite an instinctive finesse, came late. Max's style, being mannered, never needed perfect naturalness; but it did need perfect ease. And as late as "Yet Again" and "Zuleika Dobson" there is too often a slight strain in the writing, as there is a slight stretching in the contents. It was the many years that separate "Yet Again" from "And Even Now" that brought perfection. Finally everything came right: the proportions, the tone, the touch that is both intimate and reserved, the *un*exhibitionistic wit, and the Tory point of view that is worn, not as in too young a man, outrageously; nor defiantly, as in too insecure a one. Above all, the personality has found a prose that exactly suits it. It is a personality raised out of life into art, and one that while seeming to confide continues to elude one. There is the pleasantest sort of frankness; the greatest willingness to confess to all one's prejudices, predilections, oddities. But *is* this Max Beerbohm—or is it merely Max being sly? Has he told the truth or had his little joke; revealed a man or trumped one up? Is this autobiography or art, or both?

IT IS, at any rate, something remarkably engaging. For a certain kind of reader, the small habits and hankerings of this blameless exquisite can be as fascinating as all the demonic and outrageous and unsanctified adventures of a Byron or Jack London. That, whether or not it projects a real person, is proof of real personality. Perhaps in the factual sense we have never been given the true Max Beerbohm. Artistically it makes no difference—though it is my own guess that Max has usually been altogether candid, exploiting the worldling's knowledge that the truth is the last thing people ever believe.

But beyond the question of fact or fabrication lies the *effect* of personality through style; the juggling, so to speak, of the first person singular. It is probably the most ticklish problem that can confront a writer. Many very distinguished writers — Thomas Mann is perhaps the latest—have failed abysmally in talking about themselves. There is the Scylla of egotism, which must be skirted without crashing against the Charybdis of mousiness. There is the danger of striking a pose, which must again not be circumvented at the cost of a priggish earnestness. Moreover, a writer using the first person must seem neither too familiar nor too aloof; neither smug, again, nor obsequious. There is finally the peril, the besetting peril for the familiar essayist, of coyness. And though Max escapes all the other pitfalls, at times even he becomes rather coy. Yet the redeeming thing is that he does not become so oftener, particularly as his style can be very irritating. Even his mature style trades too freely in inversions, in Latinisms and archaisms, in double negatives, in "do but" and "averse from" and "belike" and "how great soever"—becoming precious, conspicuous, waxen; and I suppose one is riled the more from knowing that Max indulges in all

(*Continued on page* 41)

—*From "Art in Our Time."*

"At the Moulin Rouge: The Dance," by Toulouse-Lautrec.

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Literary Fiesta in Mexico

ELIZABETH ANN McMURRAY

FOR a Texas bookseller with little knowledge of the European book market, to whom the length and breadth of bookselling has been New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and Dallas, seven days in Mexico City are a permanent cure for the vicious disease, complacency, which attacks booksellers first, then publishers.

There are 103 bookshops with telephones in Mexico City. For a bookseller on a postman's holiday that means a lot of stops if only the best known and more important stores are on the list to visit. For every shop with an Ericcson or a Mexicana telephone or both there are two more without telephones which are still legitimate, recognized bookstores—stocking books, talking books, selling old and new books, and taking special orders. That gives Mexico City a rough total of over three hundred bookshops, and that is a conservative count. When every third bookseller admits to being a publisher, the picture begins to indicate that, next to churches and romance, books are most important in Mexico City.

These bookstores are not just stalls with a few books and a great lethargy on the part of the operators. Many have magnificent stocks of very old books with Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville imprints; fine examples of very early printing in this hemisphere; books on rag paper which for all their three hundred years are in a fine state of preservation; books bound in vellum; rare books on architecture, art, and history; all books which would be sought and treasured by librarians of American colleges, universities, and museums. To be set down in a city with over three hundred bookstores and one hundred libraries is what a visiting gringo bookseller prays for, but when this same city is playing host to a National Book Fair, it's too good to be true. I was jubilant at seeing books heralded from a monument 250 feet high, the monument of the Revolution, which dominates that entire section of the city and is visible for miles in every direction. There were 105 displays in the entire fair, with books emphasized in all of them. The fair, in its fifth year now, is actually supported by the publishers and booksellers who pay for their space. The stands are built at government expense and rented in small three- or large nine-metre spaces. Additional charge is made for preferred position. The ornamental part of the exposition

is paid for by the government and varies in its elaborateness from year to year.

President Alemán officially opened this year's fair on April 22 with cabinet members, writers, artists, and intellectuals in attendance. More than half a million people had inspected the book displays when the fair closed the middle of May.

Most governmental departments had large buildings housing impressive, well-lighted shows. The Department of Public Education had a double-barreled attraction which was running up good daily attendance totals. The Alfabetización movement, which is really "Learn to Read and Write and Teach a Neighbor," was being carried forward in a school room with blackboards, school desks, maps, and pictures. Here the Department of Education in its great literacy drive was taking the names and addresses of the Mexicans who wanted to learn to read and write. From the information thus obtained the department is able to bring together available teachers with ambitious students. Half the desks were in constant use as mature mothers and fathers and young men and women filled out the blanks for Alfabetización.

THERE were movies in the other part of the Department of Education building and an ever-changing audience poured in to see news of public education in pictures. The graphic display in the foyer also emphasized the expansion of the school system in the entire nation. Effective charts and stunning photographic murals showed clearly the great strides made in education in Mexico in the past twenty-five years.

Each booth was colorful, dramatic, and eye-catching. No matter how fundamental and practical the facts, the displays of government departments were all presented with a theatrical twist, mirrors, music, and free literature. The Secretary of Communications and Public Works had miniature models of modern trains, roads, and bridges; topographic maps; teletype machines in action. These models were especially popular with the Mexicans, old and young, and at all times crowds stood studying the moving spectacle.

Prominently exhibited in all of the commercial bookstore arrangements at the fair were the fine publications of Fondo de Cultura Economica, one of the most influential publishing houses in all Mexico. It is headed by Daniel Cosio Villegas, who is president of Cámara Mexicana del Libro, similar to our American Booksellers Association, and a member of the executive council of the organization of Latin American publishers and booksellers.

> The Fondo de Cultura Económica has a funny history [said Señor Villegas as he sat in his spacious second-floor office on Panuco Street]. We are not a commercial firm, but a non-profit institution organized to make available to Mexican students books for outside reading in the field of economics. In 1920 before we had a school of economics in Mexico five of us went away to study. We returned in 1928 to establish a School of Economics in the University of Mexico, using the methods we found being used successfully in the United States and in England. We were especially impressed with your use of outside reading but we soon found our students could not use American or English books for such work. We literally established a publishing house in order to have books in Spanish for our students.

The catalogue of the Fondo de Cultura Económica is as imposing as that of any solid, long-established textbook firm in the United States. Their projected library of Americana is of great significance and importance and is being carefully worked out under the direction of Camila Henriquez Urena, on leave from Vassar College. The plan is to cover the five periods of Latin American history and the resultant literary production and to reprint with introductions the outstanding examples from each period. The scope of this project is great and the results will interest scholars and teachers of Spanish all over the world.

(*Continued on page* 34)

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Almanac for Summer Reading

A Sampling of the Forthcoming Books

AMY LOVEMAN

June

THE changing social and intellectual attitudes of America are viewed as through the small end of a telescope in Henry Seidel Canby's recollections of the past fifty years. In "American Memoir" (Houghton Mifflin) Mr. Canby has somewhat condensed the material contained in his "Age of Confidence" and "Alma Mater" and added to these earlier books a new section covering his reminiscences of literary New York for the past quarter century. His volume is a richly tesselated work from which emerges the pattern of the American mind and mores during a momentous period.

* *

The story of the exodus of the Jews from Egypt under the leadership of Moses as well as life under the Pharaohs is described with color and immediacy in Konrad Bercovici's "The Exodus" (Beechhurst). Mr. Bercovici has succeeded in making the persons and the times of his story real and vital instead of mere historical reconstruction.

* *

Readers who liked "The Yearling" and "My Friend Flicka" will also want Dana Farella's "The Magnificent Barb" (Messner), a story which should appeal alike to lovers of horseflesh and lovers of small boys.

* *

There's highly entertaining reading for a vacation afternoon in "Fortune's Gift" (Appleton-Century), by Susan Kerby. Here is a novel that has originality and sprightliness and which in its tale of a Graustarkian principality and the American woman and English youth who meet and embark on a fantastic venture there contains some delightful and surprising situations and complications.

* *

No one can enter a claim for Natalie Anderson Scott's "The Story of Mrs. Murphy" (Dutton) as "light reading" but everyone who takes up the book must be struck by its power. It is a remarkable novel, relentless in its portrayal of an alcoholic, a young man whose desire it was "to be good, to be like everybody else. He wanted to be happy," but whose will was weak. The book is pitiless but nevertheless compassionate.

July

The omniscient John Kieran, whose knowledge extends from sports to Shakespeare, has recorded some of his observations as a lay scientist in a book entitled "Footnotes on Nature" (Doubleday).

* *

"The Moneyman" (Doubleday), by Thomas Costain, takes for hero a celebrated French merchant and financier of Charles VII's France, Jacques Coeur. As in all of Mr. Costain's novels the historical background is painted with loving care and across the stage pass a throng of persons, many of them historical figures. Agnes Sorel, of course, appears in this romance.

* *

W. Somerset Maugham's "Creatures of Circumstance" (Doubleday) may not be up to his best work but the skill never deserts the hand of this master craftsman. The fifteen short stories which constitute his book are far-ranging in background—indeed, they carry the reader all over the world—but they are alike in being urbane and vivacious and having enough tartness to give them pungency.

* *

August

There is a dual interest to Bernard DeVoto's "Across the Wide Missouri" (Houghton Mifflin) for in addition to a text which is of the liveliest and most absorbing sort the author presents for the first time reproductions of the watercolors of Alfred Jacob Miller, the "only paintings of Rocky Mountain trappers actually made on the spot and the first paintings ever made of the Rocky Mountains, the scenery along the trail to Oregon, and the Westernmost Plains Indians." The book itself is a description of the mountain fur trade "as a business and a way of life," written with the vivacity and the color which habitually make Mr. DeVoto's writing such good reading.

* *

Doubtless all Americans were aware while the war was in progress that extraordinary precautions were being taken to guard their President but just how extensive they were and what form they took must necessarily have been a matter of conjecture. Now Michael F. Reilly, who was made head of the White House Secret Service on the day of the attack on Pearl Harbor, reveals the measures that were put into effect to guard President Roosevelt. And fascinating revelations these are which William J. Slocum has put into form in "Reilly of the White House" (Simon & Schuster).

* *

By way of getting a good start on the football season Dana X. Bible's "Championship Football" (Prentice-Hall), an excellent survey of the game in all its phases, makes its appearance in midsummer.

* *

Virginia Sorensen has deserted the Mormons but not the mountain West in her new novel. "The Neighbors" (Reynal & Hitchcock) plays in Colorado and is an interesting and solid tale of the adjustment of a family to a new environment and its relations to a neighboring family the head of which resents the settlement of the newcomers on land he has himself coveted.

* *

Crisp, sophisticated, hard-boiled, and frequently cynical short stories which from time to time appeared in *The New Yorker* from the pen of John O'Hara are now issued in book form under the title of "Hellbox" (Random House).

* *

Harriet Eager Davis, whose husband for a number of years was a delegate to the League of Nations in Geneva, has described the life of an American woman and her family in that Swiss city and in an international society. "World at My Door" (Simon & Schuster) is given intensity by its

(*Continued on page* 37)

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Eight Years of Franco

REPORT FROM SPAIN. By Emmet John Hughes. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 307 pp. $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT OKIN

HERE, at last, is a definitive, authoritative, and detailed study of Generalissimo Francisco Franco's regime from the end of the Spanish Civil War until today, eight years later, when it is apparently at a new peak in its power. The testimony and the verdict of "Report from Spain" constitute one of the most resounding and devastating indictments of the regime that has yet been written by a serious and well-informed student of modern Spanish history.

The Spain he depicts is a totalitarian dictatorship run by an intellectually limited but politically cunning dictator who shrewdly manipulates the three main forces that unite only in supporting him—the traditionally reactionary army, the traditionally reactionary clergy, and the fascist Falange party. It is a country still under martial law, oppressed by brutal and unbridled police, debauched by a controlled press, hag-ridden by a fascist party which arrogantly blackmails and steals (and yet has three members who are cabinet ministers in 1947), a country where only the rich get enough to eat and political opposition is mercilessly persecuted.

Few Americans, of course, have poked beneath the lid of Spain's government without coming up with a sense of horror, outrage, and shame that such a government can exist two years after the Axis defeat. (Some, of course, have—have apologized for this government and defended it.) Mr. Hughes's contribution is a study of this phenomenon which cites much information never before published or noted in the United States and presents the more familiar facts from a fresh point of view that avoids the clichés—all marshaled with sure logic and eloquent style. His guarded but complete analysis and discussion of the role of Catholic Action presents an important Spanish force which has never been adequately studied before. His detailed survey of the opposition: the inept and divided Monarchists, the growing Communists, the more representative Socialists, Republicans, and Anarchists is unquestionably the best such survey yet published. But it is in his discussion of United Nations and United States policy that Mr. Hughes makes his most challenging assertion.

Since World War II ended, the United States and the United Nations have entered upon a policy of

—From "Franco's Black Spain," by Luis Quintanilla.

Generalissimo Francisco Franco seized upon a great and historic faith and turned it into a cruel parody of itself.

"verbal denunciations," a "policy conceived in error and ending in bankruptcy" which has served only to strengthen Franco by permitting him to pose as the defender of Spain's honor and integrity. In its stead, Mr. Hughes believes that "the American people must make a judgment of critical importance and of the greatest urgency." It should continue its sermons but implement them with sanctions. His formula:

> Such a policy would entail: an end to the fatuous banalities about not "interfering" in Spanish affairs; a categorical statement that overwhelming evidence convinces all democratic peoples that the Franco regime is not a decent neighbor in the society of nations; and support of that statement with action. Such action would entail some or all of the following measures. First, an ultimatum to Madrid from the Western democracies that their diplomatic relations will be severed by a specified date unless the Caudillo and Falange are supplanted by at least an interim regime promising to consult and respect the will of the Spanish people. Secondly, a supporting declaration of similar character by the greatest possible number of the nations of Latin America. Thirdly (if necessary), an ultimatum, either to precede shortly or to coincide with the diplomatic break, announcing economic sanctions to be imposed before a specified date. Fourth (if necessary), the imposition of sanctions. It is absolutely certain that the Spanish government could not survive . . . economic sanctions for longer than three to four months.

More than a recommendation for the future, "Report from Spain" is a history written by a young writer with a superior talent for history. Mr. Hughes has his faults, a tendency

THE AUTHOR: Emmet John Hughes is an earnest young man, and the thought that for two years he hadn't been intercepting bullets under the OWI in Madrid troubled him. In 1944 (then twenty-three) he enlisted in the Army—and was immediately reassigned, at a private's pay, to his former post heading the *Casa Americana* propaganda center he'd established. His detail, however, was stretched to include liaison for all Republican underground forces. He started as press attaché for Spanish Ambassador Carleton Hayes, his teacher at Columbia's School of Political Science, where he had a fellowship after Princeton graduated him *summa cum laude* in history in 1941. (He'd made Phi Beta Kappa the previous year.) State Department misgivings about his youth were calmed when it was pointed out that he spoke fluent Spanish and had traveled biennially in Europe. He served two ambassadors and three chargés d'affaires in all, but the most exciting moment, he says, was "getting married by the Papal Nuncio to a girl with the wonderfully un-Latin name of Marifrances Pfeifer." They have a sixteen-month-old son. His first book, "The Church and the Liberal Society," enlarging his undergraduate thesis, was published by Princeton University Press in 1944 and became a Catholic Book-of-the-Month selection. A lanky "Black Irishman," he was born in Newark and grew up in Summit, N. J., where his father is a judge. He's articulate, witty, and poised, an anti-Communist with political views approximating those of the English Liberal Party. He collects Goya etchings, likes detective stories and golf. Last year *Time-Life* made him bureau head in Rome, where the housing shortage forced him to rent a palace Badoglio wheedled out of Il Duce in lieu of more medals. He's just back from a last-fling Iberian assignment before Franco reads "Report from Spain."

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to write at times purple and indigestible prose, and at times a self-assurance that verges on cocksureness. But he has a logical, penetrating mind, a precise, workmanlike respect for accuracy, a mature political judgment solidly based on a thorough academic foundation, and an objectivity limited only by a fervent respect for the dignity and freedom of men. His book should be read not only by those who know, but, more important, it should be required reading for those who do not know for whom the bell tolls.

Robert Okin, newspaperman, lived in Spain in 1937-'39, has returned twice. He has done considerable research in modern Spanish politics.

The Junior Tribunal

THE NINE YOUNG MEN. By Wesley McCune. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 275 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT S. ALLEN

THIS is a very sound, highly readable, and long overdue sequel to "The Nine Old Men." That stormy warlock of the fierce "court packing" fight a decade ago was tougher and gamier than Mr. McCune's study. But his is more scholarly and analytical. While not pulling punches, he deals with the subject in a less combative attitude. As a result, his book has a more objective atmosphere than its famed, truculent predecessor.

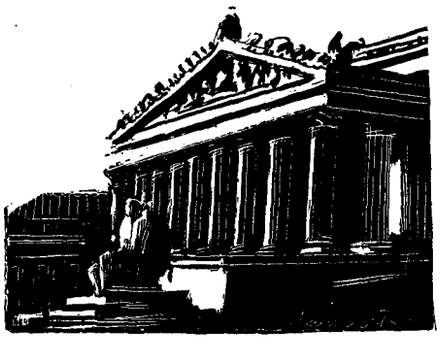
"The Nine Young Men" is a very timely book. It is the first able and comprehensive study of the far-reaching consequences of the historic New Deal assault on the entrenched reaction of the highest tribunal, and of the variegated and very human personalities that now constitute the tribunal. Also, the book provides a distinct public service in again focusing attention on the tribunal. The crucial need of this cannot be overemphasized in these despairing days of mediocre and shabbily partisan leadership at home and, worse, abroad.

To a degree realized by few, the Supreme Court, perhaps more than ever before, is the mainstay and stronghold of our fundamental liberties. With state legislatures enacting outright fascist laws and even Congress witnessing the introduction of such bills, the Supreme Court, in the next few ominous years, may well become once more the cockpit of violent and momentous fighting. It is vital that this be widely and thoroughly understood. Mr. McCune's book contributes effectively and significantly to such understanding. Simply and clearly it relates the key role the Nine Young Men are playing in our turbulent era, and the massive "defenses in depth" they have, almost unnoticed, built up to preserve our traditional free way of life.

It is an interesting commentary on our national state of mind that Mr. McCune's book should be the first full-length study of the reorganized Court and its precedent-making decisions. In the ten years since the battle over the tribunal, there have been scores of articles about it and its rulings. But "The Nine Young Men," for the first time, ties all the ends together in a well-integrated account, and in language the layman can understand, tells what the Court is, how it is functioning, what it has done, and why.

The last two are particularly important. As Mr. McCune graphically demonstrates, the Court is made up of human beings—in the case of several of the Justices, frequently all too human. Personal ambitions, hates, even neuroses, in at least one instance, are playing a deciding part in not only the private relations of the Justices but in their inner councils. As Mr. McCune makes clear, it is not an exaggeration to say that personalities are entering directly and decisively into the Court's mandates.

That is not new in the history of the tribunal. "The Nine Old Men" recorded many instances of this in the long and contradictory history of the Court. What is new about it is that for the first time it is no secret to the general public. The New Deal jeremiad against the Court stripped it of its sacrosanct trappings of God-like omniscience and saintliness. No longer is the Court an awesome Holy of Holies. It is now generally accepted as a matter of fact that, behind their funeral robes and august



props, the Justices are as human as the next guy and just as much subject to human frailties, foibles, and inconsistencies.

This wholesome debunking is one of the greatest fruits of the 1937 Court battle.

Very fittingly, Mr. McCune sets the stage for the Nine Young Men with an excellent account of the hectic crusade against the Nine Old Men. With a sound grasp of the basic issues involved in the struggle, he recounts the tactical blunders of the Roosevelt Administration, the secret intrigues within the Court, and the opposition to kill the "packing" bill, and the far-reaching effect the measure had on the Court's attitude toward New Deal measures.

Similarly, in coherent and chronological order, Mr. McCune records the evolution of the Nine Young Men; the sordid "lynching bee" conducted by the reactionary press against Justice Hugo Black, the strange devolution of Justice Frankfurter from a highly vocal liberal champion to the most conservative and frantic, power-hungry member of the bench, the equally strange case and antics of Justice Robert Jackson, and the great and far-reaching precepts the oddly-assorted tribunal has handed down during the past decade.

"The Nine Young Men" is another instance of outstanding journalism within book covers. Mr. McCune is a newspaperman. He is a great credit to his profession, and his book a great service to his countrymen.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 209

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 209 will be found in the next issue.

AKDX D WXYTMH XKMRL

MW DR SPH QDR PJDVRMRL

DR DPTKDFJX.

QMGKJP HJ QSRXDMLRJ

JWWDCW

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 208

Steal the goose and give the giblets in alms.

JOHN RAY
English Proverbs.

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The Civil War Blunder

LINCOLN THE LIBERAL STATESMAN. By J. G. Randall. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1947. 266 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE FORT MILTON

IN these eight essays, Professor Randall continues to wield the provocative, informed, searchingly questioning pen he employed with such value in "Lincoln the President." The issues he examines and the questions he raises in the present book must have clamored for treatment as the 1945 volumes were shaping on the historical assembly line. The nuance-questing historian who delves into fringe questions about great public characters—particularly those that can be regarded from many angles, each revealing different shadows beneath shaggy brows or forebodings in the eyes—emerges from his research with a host of questions demanding space but which he just can't get into the hold of that particular historical argosy. But after the book sails, the author can take another straight, hard look at the unanswered questions, approach them from every point of the inquisitorial compass, and when unanswerable, give his hunch why such is the case.

This is what I suspect Dr. Randall has done in several of these essays. The longer he delved into Lincoln's times, the more amazed and provoked he must have become over the way North and South (or at least some firebrands in both sections) blundered into the Civil War. His exasperation expresses itself in a satirical, whimsical bill of indictment of how "A Blundering Generation stumbled into a ghastly war, how it blundered through four years of indecisive slaughter, how the triumph of the Union was spoiled by the manner in which the victory was used."

As he says, the four years were full of "intolerance and selfish grasping." Partisanship was then at its worst, the supreme tragedy being that where Lincoln was at his best—moderate, temperate, and far-seeing—he failed to carry the Republican Party with him. Professor Randall finds few Civil War examples that deserve emulation today; most of its measures are significant only as things to be avoided. Nor was it in any real sense either a conflict of cultures or of antagonistic economies. In this latter field, he well says that at the time of Sumter, "economic diversity offered as much motive for union as for the kind of economic conflict suggested by secession."

He reminds us that it was a Victorian war, with all the overtones of fundamentalism, McGuffey's reader morality, railsplitting humor, shabby-genteel stuffiness. He instances the way Jay Cooke, "the financier of the Union," reproved a cashier for driving a four-in-hand in Central Park one Sunday afternoon: This would "bring great discredit to the bank. Credit is a tender plant"!

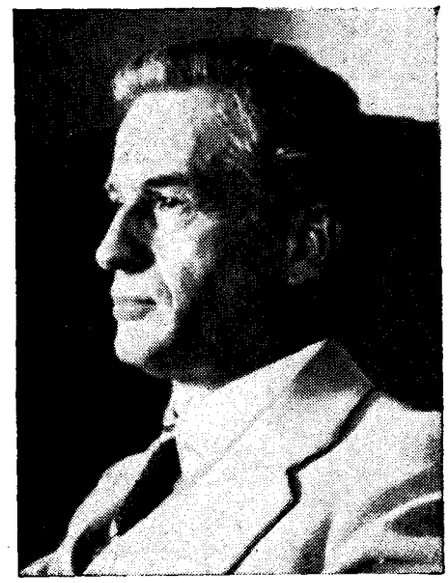
Not without reason has he concluded that the Civil War mind was compound of "party bile, crisis melodrama, inflated eloquence, unreason, religious fury, self-righteousness, unctuous self-deception, and hate." And yet the war generation talked grandiloquently about its "rendezvous with destiny," with Emerson rejoicing that the Civil War "sweeps away all false notes" because "war is a realist, shatters everything flimsy and shifty"!

One of Lincoln's chief merits, as Dr. Randall emphasizes, is that while he waged the Civil War, nonetheless the "war mind" never possessed him. He regarded the war as a needless tragedy, a punishment both of the North and the South. He sought peace and reconciliation as soon as Lee surrendered. It was his purpose to "restore" the South to the Union, not to "reconstruct" it into an agricultural slum.

The essay on "The Unpopular Mr. Lincoln" would be timely reading for Franklin D. Roosevelt's contemners. To many contemporaries, the man from Springfield never emerged from its shadow: he offended moderates without satisfying radicals; he suppressed civil rights, headed a regime shot through with corruption, bungled the war, lost the peace! Reciting how quickly Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, the impeccable, inconsolable Chase, and other lookers through grim glasses deplored Lincoln's "failure," how few would concede him any good points at all, Professor Randall warns against excusing this ugly opposition because the war President partially overcame it. Actually, the opposition did "incalculable harm"—it prolonged the war, set the stage for post-war hate and scandal, was one of the nation's greatest tragedies.

The title essay tears away such partisan caricature and reveals the basic "Jeffersonian liberalism" with which Lincoln reacted, in the prairie years and in the White House, to the conditions and problems of his America.

Lincoln's misclassification as a conservative or even reactionary arises chiefly from the fact that the label "Radical" was sloppily given the Republican extremists who fought his



J. G. Randall's "exasperation expresses itself in a satirical, whimsical bill of indictment."

policies; John Hay called them "Jacobins," because of the appalling contrast between their pious unction in public and their unscrupulous motives and methods in private; Randall thinks "Vindictives" more apt, for they were radical only in vindictiveness. In economics, Thad Stevens, Zach Chandler, Ben Wade, and the rest of the wrecking crew worked hand in glove with the most villainous business and financial racketeers of the day. "Caliban" was not responsible for the club foot he had been born with, but as Randall says, "his sneering lower lip was his own." Yet this camarilla dared to term the President a failure because he "had no moral principle."

The real Lincoln, as the historian makes clear, was conservative in the sense that he preferred orderly change, distrusted dangerous agitation, avoided the "radicalism" which called for abuse of the South, thirst for vengeance, demands that Southern institutions be turned topsy-turvy overnight. His liberalism called for evolutionary, democratic progress, not the violence, fanaticism, and torture the extremists of Civil War days insisted on. His deeply searching mind, says Randall,

> —had motivating sympathy, awareness of social needs, enthusiasm for effective democracy—qualities appropriately denoted by the word "liberal." If in procedure he wanted to be sure of his ground, in the content and purpose of his program he wanted liberal causes to succeed. If his conservatism was a kind of brake or saving common sense, liberalism was his vital spark . . . His basic ideas were those of Thomas Jefferson.

This seems to me a completely valid statement of the case. Lincoln had

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no patience with the idea of a do-nothing, a mere caretaker government. In 1854 he quoted approvingly Jefferson's declaration that the legitimate object of government is "to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they cannot by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves." He was well aware of the public necessities even then calling for the social service state we partly have today. Dr. Randall more than makes the case for Lincoln's liberal statesmanship. His concept is as clear as his scholarship is sound. The new book is a most useful addition to the Lincoln literature.

George Fort Milton, of the Buffalo Evening News, *is author of "Abraham Lincoln and the Fifth Column." and "The Use of Presidential Power."*

Public Relations for U.S. and U.S.S.R.

OVER AT UNCLE JOE'S: MOSCOW AND ME. By Oriana Atkinson. Illustrations by Paul Galdone. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1947. 325 *pp.* $3.

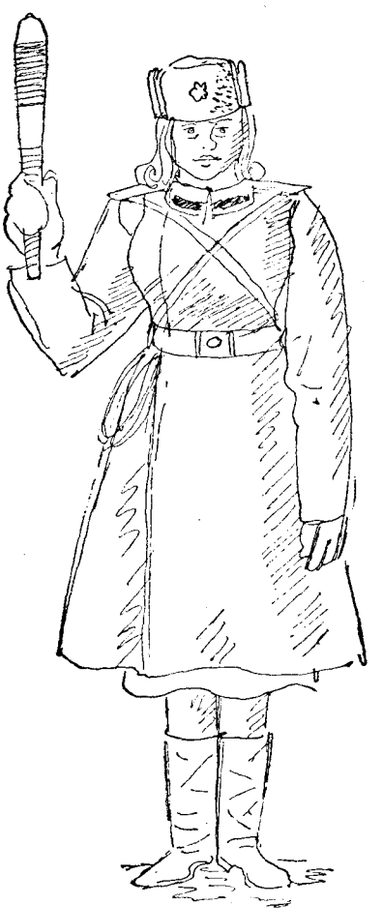
Reviewed by ANN F. WOLFE

"WHY she is a very nice lady," exclaimed the little Russian girl to her mother. "I can hardly believe that she is a capitalist." The little girl had just met Mrs. Atkinson, but she paid her immediate tribute as unofficial public relations emissary for the American people. By the same token, Mrs. Atkinson does a remarkable public relations job for the Russian people. She observes them shrewdly, assays them solely as human beings, sets down her findings with spirit, candor, and humor. "Over at Uncle Joe's" is that seven-day wonder, a book on the Russians that is free of propaganda pro or con, hearty with laughter, rich in hope for Russian-American understanding.

As wife of *The New York Times* correspondent Brooks Atkinson, the author spent "ten grubby, tiresome, frustrated, fascinating months" in wartime and post-war Moscow. It was her second visit to the clean and picturesque Soviet capital. "I know more about Russia," is her modest claim, "than anybody who has *never* been there."

There is more common sense in this book than you could shake a balalaika at. The author went to Russia with an open mind and at least one hat that amused the Moscow populace. She does not identify copper plumbing with civilization or literacy with culture. Admitting that Russia is a land of contradictions, she forms judgments on the premise: "There is always another side of the picture in the Soviet Union." She neither judges the many by the few nor the rule by the exception. "Do not forget, please, that I am a Soviet citizen," snapped a Moscow teen-ager to her father, "and if you attempt to punish me, I shall report you to the police." Such a bobby-sox Messalina, Mrs. Atkinson points out, is not typical. "Little Russian children seem to me to be angels. Most of the older ones seem to me to be normally human." She sketches a variety of small-fry types to show what she means. After visiting Moscow school rooms, studying curricula, and admiring the pupils' manners — "charming, old-fashioned, highly conventional, and pleasing"—she concludes that "there is no horsing around in the schools."

The author does not handle the Russians with kid gloves, which are among the scarcer accessories in Soviet wardrobes. But she uses bare knuckles on Americans. The Moscow subway is sub-humanly crowded, but so is the New York subway at rush hours. And Americans do not have the esthetic satisfactions of subway architecture to inspire them, as the Moscovites do. Moscow hotel managers are patient with Americans' everlasting demands and never get back at them with, "Why don't you go back where you came from?" Mrs. Atkinson once told a GI balletomane from Syracuse that Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre is "bigger, better, and more beautiful" than New York's Metropolitan Opera House. Incited to dire thoughts by the comparison, the young chauvinist muttered: "Well, these guys better look out; they just better look out, that's all."



From the book.

One of Uncle Joe's traffic cops.

Throughout Mrs. Atkinson's chapters the human equation triumphs over ideological conviction. She tells the story of a threadbare Russian who acquired, through American channels, three new suits of clothes. "Just see how much better conditions are today than they were a year ago," he boasted. "Formerly I was in rags, but now, as you can see, I have three good suits." The author explains: "He really meant it. . . . He preferred to think that this new status was due to the careful planning of his own government and so we all let him think so. It's grand to have stars in your eyes, even though they prevent your seeing what really is going on."

What interests you most about life in the Russian capital—freedom of worship, family life, the theatre, beggars, prostitution, fashions, racial equality, class distinctions, courtship techniques, "spontaneous demonstrations," the Russian ideal of womanhood? You may be curious about the zooming birthrate or how the Russians hold their vodka. Mrs. Atkinson has briskly stirred them all into her bubbling literary borscht. For garnishing she uses practical recipes, cosmetic and culinary, and at least one bit of décor that out-swimming-pools Hollywood—"a shiny new Zis automobile completely upholstered in red fox fur and a uniformed chauffeur with a snappy red fox hat to match."

In "Over at Uncle Joe's" there is an appealing Lydia Vyschinskaya who, speaking of Mrs. Atkinson, declared: "Even though I could not understand her language, I wanted to understand *her* with all my heart." Perhaps we could do worse than call a moratorium on both appeasement and get-tough programs, ministers' conferences and such, and let Lydia Vyschinskaya and Oriana Atkinson get together on a plan for Russian-American understanding.

Ann F. Wolfe is an editor of The New Quarterly of Poetry. *She has been contributing to periodicals both here and abroad for many years.*

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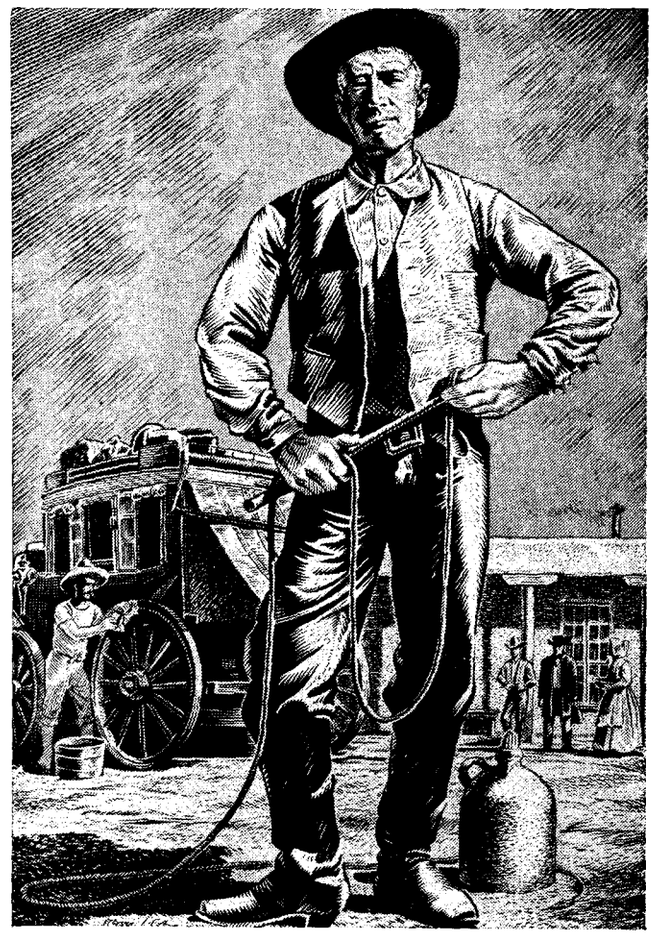
300 Years of Texas History

CALENDAR OF TWELVE TRAVELERS THROUGH THE PASS OF THE NORTH. Drawings by Tom Lea. El Paso: Printed by Carl Hertzog. 1947. *Unpaged.* 365 *copies.* $17.

THE place where the Rio Grande pushes through the spurs of the Rockies and out into the plains provided the logical point for travelers from Mexico to cross over into what was to become the United States. That point was called by a simple name which accurately describes it—El Paso del Norte. A city grew there. Tom Lea has drawn pictures of twelve "strong men who have filed through that pass" between 1536 and 1850. Their names alone make a splendid and resonant roster: Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, Fray Agustin Rodriquez, Antonio de Espejo, Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, Juan de Oñate, Fray Garcia de San Francisco, Diego de Vargas, Zebulon Pike, Juan Maria Ponce de Leon, James Magoffin, Alexander Doniphan, Big Foot Wallace. Mr. Lea has immortalized them in lusty and vivid portraiture, and Carl Hertzog has put them into a book that has something of the sweep of the plains and of the breadth of Texas in it. Brief accounts of the colorful subjects appear opposite the portraits. Portraits and text lose nothing of their force and dignity from the fact that they originally appeared on menus that graced the dining-room tables of the Hotel Paso del Norte during the days of food shortages. These dozen travelers through the pass, one may be sure, were hearty trenchermen, and it would have delighted them to open menus with their likenesses on the outside, and to discover within the noble intelligence: "Sirloin steak (when available), $1.50, served with potatoes and coffee."



"Big Foot Wallace, eye and trigger finger sharp as his courage."

"A young Army officer named Zebulon Pike in 1807 became the first American citizen of record to enter the Pass of the North."

"The first building at El Paso del Norte was the mission structure built by Indian converts of Fray Garcia de San Francisco in 1659."

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Here Lies a Man of Letters

FRANK HARRIS. By E. Merrill Root. New York: The Odyssey Press. 1947. 324 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

FEW critics over the last century have been as discerning as Frank Harris, few editors as appreciative of new talent, or as attracted by the flare of genius. He descended into his now almost forgotten grave in the English cemetery in Nice at the age of seventy-five, his name and reputation blackened by the scurrilous attacks of the smaller people he had wounded, praised by a few of the great whom he had helped to fame, who could not refrain from a final gibe. He was attacked for being pro-German, for being anti-Jewish (when he was not), for being a pornographer, when he was only concerned with the whole life of an individual and considered the manifestations of sex and mating in much the same wholesome way as Walt Whitman and D. H. Lawrence.

That he was his own worst enemy is obvious from Mr. Root's eulogistic biography. There was something offensive and at the same time magnetic about him. He was a short, spare man, bustling with vitality and superbly confident of his own greatness. His piercing eyes, his black mustache, his clothes that were not "quite right," his bouncing virility gave him the look of a successful gambler or race-track tout. Added to this, out of his small frame came a bass voice like a tuneful and muted foghorn. He was created to charm people, but in the wrong way, and always to give the impression that he was not really a gentleman.

It is time that he had a biographer who was a devotee and who could explain how he played so great a part in the golden sunset of Victorian literature, and how his life ended so dismally in poverty and oblivion. His brilliance as a youthful editor is unquestioned; first the *Evening News,* which he tried to make great "and succeeded in making merely successful"; then for eight years that solid and influential magazine *The Fortnightly Review,* and *The* (English) *Saturday Review,* which he had purchased. He was only thirty-one and an American, when he became *Fortnightly's* editor and administered enough adrenalin to resurrect that moribund magazine; his vital personality had won him friends, and the praise of the aged but still fulminating giant, Carlyle. Month after month he published at least one real contribution to literature, and occasional magnificent essays and criticisms of his own. His directors were cautious men. Swinburne, Walter Pater, Wilde's preface to "The Picture of Dorian Gray" were well enough; but they thought it was monstrous for him to pay fifty pounds for a single poem and thoroughly disapproved of his keeping writers alive by dipping into his own pocket. After eight of the best years of his life he surrendered and bought *The Saturday Review.* There he ran into real trouble. He was violently opposed to the

Frank Harris "was created to charm people, but in the wrong way."

Boer War, and his reports from Africa after the Jameson Raid aroused the resentment of the great Cecil Rhodes. It ended with Rhodes sending a lord around to buy the magazine; eventually Harris received forty thousand pounds. It amounted to hush money, for it was far more than *The Saturday Review* could conceivably have been worth. It was his last important editorial position and from 1898 on he slowly lost his preeminent position. He had made enemies of the great, championed unpopular causes, and all of the forces of Victorian England were thereafter at work to have done with this braggart and upstart. Besides, the reputation of few editors endures; they are, to strain a metaphor of Mr. Root's, keepers of literary graveyards; only remembered for the names carved on the tombstones.

Harris was to make more enemies, for he became a partisan of Oscar Wilde. He had known him as the wittiest of his friends and, of course, had met him everywhere, even inside the great mansions to which he was constantly invited, in spite of Wilde's famous cruel epigram, "Frank Harris is invited to the best houses—once." He admired Wilde as a genius, but his normal instincts led him to despise the evidences of the perversity in Wilde that was to destroy him. Later Harris was to declare that Emma Goldman was the greatest woman he had ever met and to praise Trotsky. The man could never stay on the right side of the fence. To quote Shaw's epitaph, "Here lies a man of letters who hated cruelty and injustice and bad art, and never spared them in his own interests. R.I.P." To add to this category of crimes against the gods there is his three-volume autobiography, "My Life and Loves," and you have reason enough to back up Mr. Root's ardent championship.

Frank Harris is so little read today that it is difficult to follow his biographer's belief in his greatness as a writer and a critic. His style was trenchant, and his phrases were never dull, perhaps; but he was too exuberant and florid. When he called on old Carlyle who did not know him even by name, but who had become, along with John Stuart Mill, Harris's hero during his years in America, he said, "Sir, you have long been to me a living voice; yet you have been an abstraction. Now I seek to know your living presence, as I have known your living influence in this our brotherhood of woe and duty." But Carlyle took it and liked it and gave him the letter to Froude that started him off on his career. Carlyle wrote, "I expect more considerable things from this young man than from any I have met since Emerson."

Mr. Root's valuable book suffers from an over-elaborate style. But he is a poet as well as an essayist and may be excused for calling his idolized subject "God's Spy," or sentences like this: "He rose to a lyric immolation of self before the All whose spirit filled substance and made the universe a poem—or a Euclidian theorem." About Harris's by no means lyric countenance, he writes, "It is a face of pure spirit, brave for all great things; yet about the eyes there is a hint and prescience of pain." Poor Harris; his faults rather than his virtues have given him whatever earthy immortality he is to have. For long after his "Shakespeare, the Man" is forgotten, he will be remembered for a bad biography of Bernard Shaw and for three volumes about himself which will remain forever classified as pornography.

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Talk in the Back Room

THE DARK PHILOSOPHERS. By Gwyn Thomas. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1947. 178 pp. $2.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

THIS tale, which entertains with bitter humor, is one that seems a little less important in retrospect than during the reading of it. Mr. Thomas has a persuasive, skilful way with him, and he speaks with a fresh voice, not the tired or mimetic voice of the crowd; but what remains of "The Dark Philosophers," after it has been put aside for a week or so (or what remains for me, at least), is the memory of a humorous narrative technique rather than the recollection of a substantial literary experience. Mr. Thomas is his own man, and that is saying a good deal. He also writes of and for the common man, as exemplified by the poverty-ridden folk of a Welsh mining community, and this means that he is sure of a sympathetic audience in this enlightened age of ours, which is no less noted for its humanitarianism than for its nuclear physics. I think, however, that his remarkable success as a humorist somewhat lessens the intended intellectual and emotional effects of his story. He has coated his bitter pill so attractively that readers may end by swallowing it with rather more enjoyment than its true nature should permit.

> What I write [he tells us in a jacket statement] is tied umbilically to the astonishing Rhondda Valley where I was born and brought up.
>
> It is a great, sprawling mining community hemmed between high, close hills. In the course of my childhood and youth this rapidly assembled and matured community of 200,000 people was shrunken and twisted under the impact of long strikes and a bitter depression.

We see the valley people, or at least a few of them, through the eyes of four ex-miners who have weathered both strikes and depression, and who have acquired considerable "philosophy" during the weathering process. These four—John who tells the story, and his friends Walter, Arthur, and Ben—are hard-headed, hard-tongued realists who know what they know; who are not to be argued out of their knowledge by any man. When young Willie starts quoting to them the Reverend Emmanuel's philosophy of patience, they instruct young Willie firmly in the facts of life. They, too, had once listened to the Reverend Emmanuel, when denunciation of mine owners and managers had come from his pulpit like burning hail, when he had fiercely denounced "the over-long hours, brutalizing toil, and poor housing which were converting such places as the Terraces into catchment areas for oafs and cretins."

But that had been long ago. Threatened by management, and "stricken by the fear of destitution which is a horrible fear in those who have lived close to destitution and escaped from it," Emmanuel had sold out to the enemy. He had even given up the girl he wished to marry. Since then the four friends had observed Emmanuel's career with philosophic interest, but from a distance; while the preacher's appearance grew ever more saintly and his voice ever gentler, as he counseled the inhabitants of the Terraces to have faith in their betters and in the ultimate mercy of God.

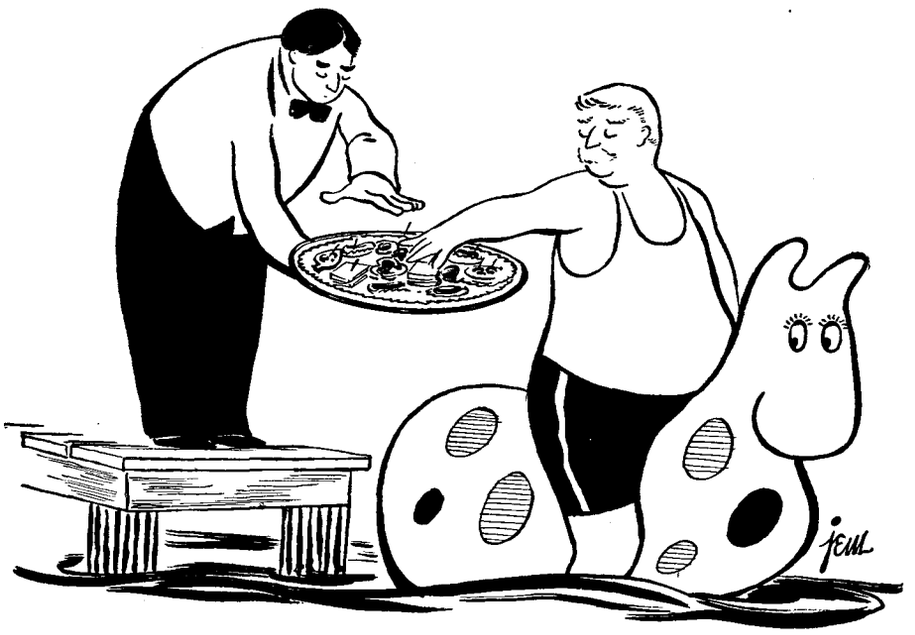
The mere plot of "The Dark Philosophers" is concerned with the circumstances in which the four find themselves once again involved with the Reverend Emmanuel, thanks to the youth Willie and the girl Margaret. But this plot matters little, for it is thin and too neatly contrived. What does matter is the talk that goes on in the back room of Idomeneo's confectionery shop, where the four usually spend their evenings, often with Willie, sometimes with Margaret, and often listening to a concert of records played on the Italian's old cabinet gramophone. It is in this setting that Gwyn Thomas says most of what he has to say, through the mouths of characters whom he endows with almost bardic eloquence, but whose language, as James Hilton and Walter D. Edmonds have noted on the book's jacket, is often strangely reminiscent of Damon Runyon and his horse-players.

These humorous echoes, however, dwindle and die on occasion; as they do when Willie urges that hatred should be forgotten, and Walter replies:

> You cannot forget things that have been your entire life for many years. The insult of a moment, Willie, is hard enough to forget but when men have to endure the insult of being idle, degraded, and useless for years on end, not only is it impossible to forget that, it becomes an act of faith to cherish the memory of it every moment one lives, because one's duty as a human being from that time on is to fight against the possibility of that insult being leveled against oneself or against others again. You're young, Willie. You only caught a glimpse of the knife that went right through our bodies.

The echoes are absent again in the longer and even more eloquent answer to Margaret when she says one cannot judge a man "without looking right down deep into his heart and soul." That passage is too long for quotation here, but it is such passages that give "The Dark Philosophers" its highest value.

Yet, I must repeat, it is not these that one remembers best, even though one can turn back to them readily enough. It is the humor, with its shifting surfaces of cynicism, wild imagination, playfulness—and its persistent sub-surface bitterness. Almost every soldier finds himself capable of joking in the face of battle. Not so many can joke under the pressure of grinding poverty. Mr. Thomas's philosophers are tough specimens, into whom he has breathed real life. But I have a feeling that in creating them he has only been testing out literary powers that will be exercised even more successfully in years and books to come.



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Report from the Doorway of Death

FOREST OF THE DEAD. By Ernst Wiechert. Translated by Ursula Stechow. New York: Greenberg Publishers. 1947. 135 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by F. C. WEISKOPF

Ernst Wiechert — "sensitive, sentimentalffi, warmhearted, highly articulate poet whose imagery is both bold and exuberant."

I STILL remember vividly how, on a spring day of 1936, a man who had come to Prague from Germany put before me on my desk a loaf of bread and asked for a knife "to get out a peculiar brand of crumb." This turned out to be a bunch of mimeographed sheets wrapped up in wax paper. The sheets, which were to be forwarded to a literary magazine published by exiled German writers, contained the text of a speech to Munich University students by Ernst Wiechert. News about and excerpts from that speech (which had earned its author an arrest and short imprisonment by the Gestapo) were already known to me as they had found their way in clandestine handbills and papers across the border; but never before had I had an opportunity to read it in extenso. It was a very strange reading experience, for the author now speaking out against the gladiator's spirit and the boxer's ethics of a Nazified people belonged to those few German writers of some renown who had not left Germany after Hitler's rise to power. As a matter of fact, nobody had expected Ernst Wiechert to go into exile. He was a conservative nationalist, a bard of Germanic virtues, including bellicosity. The Nazis considered him, not without good reason, to be an outstanding representative of their beloved literature of *Blut und Boden*, blood and soil. They knew that he had glorified war, calling it "the great giver and redeemer." They had hailed his ideas of a "German education towards hatred, hardness, and armed power." But now, from the words on those sheets taken out of their bread loaf hideout, it became clear that Wiechert like some others of the early pathmakers of the Third Reich had been horrified at the sight of the materialized German millennium.

That Munich speech marked the beginning of Ernst Wiechert's journey into a special kind of exile, the so-called Inner Emigration. First he only retreated within himself. To put it in his own words, from the opening paragraphs of "Forest of the Dead":

> He had already passed the midway mark of life and stood at the peak of what seemed to be a secure, much envied, and rather distinguished existence, when once more the things of his world and the belief in another began to fluctuate and waver, so that an everdarkening shadow beclouded his soul by day and night. In fruitless brooding his days revolved around the ideas of justice, of human dignity, and of God's Kingdom on earth, while his nights were overshadowed and laden with those heavy and yet shapeless dreams so familiar to him from earlier crises in his life. In those hours, detached from the wakeful reality of life, it was not only as if his soul was suffering from the passing day, but also as if the future, foreboding evil, stood silent and warning on the dark threshold of consciousness — formless, voiceless, and without a face.
>
> There was no day on which he did not see the triumph of injustice, of force, a shallow phrase, a lie. And though he was still able to keep free of hatred . . . he saw decay slowly creeping over his soul, as he had sometimes seen rust spreading over plants. . . . With the first days of spring it seemed that Fate upon its silent round would knock at his door, too. Perhaps at another time he might have ignored the quiet warning . . . but now that his own skin had, as it were, been scorched, he felt the faintest breath of injustice as he would feel a glowing iron. The news struck like a blow at his very heart.

The news was that of Pastor Niemoeller's arrest in 1937 for his opposition to the Nazi policy in matters of the Church. Wiechert wrote a letter of protest to the Nazi party office in his district.

> He knew that with this letter the die was cast. . . . Secretly, so as not to alarm his family, he tried now to prepare and to put his house in order. However, partly from stubbornness and partly from sheer weariness, he failed to do away with diaries and letters which might be readily interpreted as hostile to the existing State. He was not a conspirator himself nor had he ever taken up connections with those who aimed to overthrow the government. . . . He waited for his fate, and when it came with the early days of May, it found him ready and not even astonished that the great mill was engulfing him now, too, to see what was the substance of his grain. Early one morning he watched a grey car passing along the fence. . . . Three men got out.

"Forest of the Dead" is the story of what happened to the man Johannes (as Wiechert calls himself in the book) after the three Gestapo agents had searched his home, confiscated his diaries and letters, and led him away—a prisoner charged with crimes against the Nazi party and the State.

It is one more report on life in a concentration camp at a time when those "educational institutions" were still for Germans, German Jews (and Austrians) only. The gas chambers of Maidanek, the mass destruction factories of Oswiecim were yet to be invented by the imaginative mind of Herr Himmler and his aides. Wiechert's family succeeded even in getting his release from camp Buchenwald after a not-too-long imprisonment. Thus, it is not an expression of modesty but a factual statement when Wiechert prefaces his book with the words: "This report is meant to be no more than a prelude to the great Symphony of Death. . . . I have but stood in the doorway and looked at the dark stage, and I have recorded not so much what my eyes have seen as what my soul has seen."

In these few sentences, Wiechert himself has given us a critique in a nutshell of "Forest of the Dead," pointing out its peculiar limitations as well as its peculiar values. It is a report from the doorway about events and men seen not so much with the eyes or the sharp analytical mind but with the soul—the soul of a sensitive, sometimes sentimental, warmhearted, highly articulate poet whose imagery is both bold and exuberant, full of tenderness and full of pathos, now lofty and now heavy with brooding, now a child of the Romanticists and now an offspring of *Heimatdichtung*. As a human document, "Forest of the Dead" will take its place at the side of the more enduring literary testimonies of a dark period.

Miss Stechow has done a competent job of translation. Her explanatory notes will be helpful to the American reader.

F. C. Weiskopf's latest book (first of a series) is "Twilight on the Danube." Previously there were "Firing Squad" and "Dawn Breaks."

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Fantastic Love

MISTER ST. JOHN. By Raoul C. Faure. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 279 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by LEO LERMAN

WHEN Raoul C. Faure's first published novel, "The Spear in the Sand," appeared about a year ago, it was immediately touted as a most remarkable and successful *tour de force.* Instantly, it was apparent to even the most pedestrian critical eye that here was a "new" writer who not only could really write but who could also think deeply and originally. Mr. Faure was, moreover, a dreamer of extraordinary dreams who had fashioned a lambiant fabric of supple threads through which he ecstatically communicated his intensely personal vision to all who could read. Mr. Ben Ray Redman, summing up critical opinion, said in *SRL,* "This is an extraordinary book, one of the most extraordinary that has come to me for review during the past twenty-five years." Now, here is Raoul C. Faure's second published novel, "Mister St. John." It, also, is an extraordinary book—extraordinary because it is so dismal a failure.

I am so angry with "Mister St. John" because I expected so much delight from it. I am so angry with Mr. Faure because he has permitted his own special magic — the mysterious unlabored, lovely, metaphysical magic so peculiarly his own—to elude him in "Mister St. John." Mr. Faure's prose in "The Spear in the Sand" is alive. It has an inherent vitality. It is passionate. It sings. It is not merely the patiently polished carapace of an original and beautiful idea, but an integral, organic part of that idea. Everything in "The Spear in the Sand" is congruous—as everything should be in a work of art. To have written that novel in any other style or in any other form would have impaired it. "Mister St. John" could have been written in any one of a dozen different styles—it could have been a book of essays—and benefited.

But "Mister St. John" is a novel and a fantasy. Now, dear Mr. Faure, fantasy, as you so well know, has precise and logical laws. Why then do you flout them in this cumbersome novel? True, you are the magician — you make the laws. Every author is God in his own domain—be it paradise or hell. You invent your realm out of your own dreams and out of the world's dreams which have preceded yours. But to materialize your particular dream (which includes the world's dreams) and communicate that dream, you must remember that even God is law-abiding.

For example, take time — in all of its three tenses. You can juggle time any which way you desire, but your juggling must conform to a basic, logical pattern which you establish, the veracity of which it is your duty to persuade your readers. In "Mister St. John," you violate one of fantasy's basic laws. You confuse time —intentionally, I am sure—but extraneously and so, quite unsuccessfully. I have not space enough here to elaborate on this—nor does your novel warrant more than the briefest indication of some of its faults. But about time—it's tricky. Particularly when you permit it to lead a life all its own.

Since "Mister St. John" is a novel (that it is a novel is part of what is wrong with it) we must consider Mr. Faure's story and what he is trying to say. His story idea is an ancient one. I do not mean the adjective critically. Dr. Elian, at sixty-five, is a renowned medical man. On the evening of his death, he is visited by Mister St. John—the devil—and a most attractively drawn character he is, too. After an act of grace which persuades Dr. Elian that this engaging visitant is truly the devil, Mister St. John rolls back time for Dr. Elian and permits him to live the passionate life of ecstasy which would have been his had he not chosen the highroad of respectability and public good. I must point out that Dr. Elian betook himself to this road because he lacked faith in true love. Now there's a novel in this and a good one. But Mr. Faure unfortunately convolutes his idea, attenuates it infinitely, tediously. There are patches where story, ideas, and writing shine like sudden moonlight on a black, black night. But sudden moonlight suffices for the briefer, less complex art forms—the lyric or other not too long poem forms, the sheaf of acutely crystallized notes, or, at most, the short essay. You need the full moon for a novel.

Now about what Mr. Faure has to say: he has much to say and it's almost all well worth saying. But the unfortunate manner in which he has chosen to speak his heart and mind annihilates, almost completely, the value of his thought. Mr. Faure is remarkably well informed on the peripatetic life of the heart and the fluctuating climate of the spirit. Live truly, he tells us—follow your heart. Be true to yourself! And Dr. Elian, through the devil's kindness, lives, for a few brief moments before his death, the true life of his heart. In these moments he endures the real climate of his spirit. And so he negates thirty sleep-walking years. There's verity here. But, dear Mr. Faure, next time you tell the truth please make it less of a bore. Don't confuse it with bad stage management. Remember that you are an artist and a novelist. If you want to tell the truth in a novel, write a novel—the kind of novel you know how to write so brilliantly. Please do not give us a series of turgid dialogues.

"Raoul C. Faure is remarkably well informed on the peripatetic life of the heart and the fluctuating climate of the spirit."

Analysis

By Witter Bynner

ALTHOUGH I said I can not say my say
Because of too much love, I set aside
My fond delinquency and, if I may,
Look at you as another lover's bride,
Look at you otherwise than as I would,
See you a person moved by wind and weather,
See you a person of vicissitude,
See you and me unsurely bound together . . .
And yet there comes, as if indifferent
To reasoning, your sure and whimsical smile
Mixing the unintended with intent
And utmost innocence with utmost guile.
Who else but you could always extricate
Our single measure from our double fate?

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Strictly Personal

STEPCHILDREN OF THE MUSE

A DOZEN years ago, while working in a book shop I owned, I was often embarrassed by forgetting the names of some of our most constant readers. I had known many of them for years; I have an excellent memory for faces; but all too often when it came time to take their orders or check their library books I was compelled to ask them their names.

Freud explains this by saying we forget what we dislike. It must be so. For I know that I care nothing for names, and I hate labels.

Particularly I hate labels by which novels are catalogued. A novel is either a good book or a bad one. There is no other criterion; and there should be none.

Recently I've been looking over editorial reports on manuscripts submitted for publication. These reports were from members of both the editorial and sales departments. And I was struck by the frequency with which one statement appeared on these reports. That statement was a variant of: "This is excellent *for an historical novel* (or, a mystery story, or, a western)." Always the qualifying phrase. How in the name of English Lit. XII can this be relevant? Was it an excellent novel, or wasn't it?

Professor Mott, that suave and handsome pedagogue who guided our faltering feet through the Variorum Editions of Shakespeare, used to shock our awe-struck souls by roundly declaring that "Macbeth" was nothing more or less than a good, ripsnorting, blood-and-thunder mystery yarn. Yet "Macbeth" is not without some critical acclaim. "Vanity Fair" is unquestionably an historical novel; yet it too suffers from no ex-post-facto qualifying phrases. And Willa Cather's superb "Death Comes for the Archbishop" contains all the elements of a conventional western. What's the answer? Simply this, I suppose — stepchildren make strange bedfellows.

Other voices have been raised in defense of the historical romance and the mystery story. As a matter of fact recent sales of the former have dressed that vigorous, bawling infant in velvet and lace, even if he still may not play with the kids on the other side of the railroad track. And if the mystery story wears no such royal raiment, at least his face has been scrubbed, Presidents sponsor him, reviewers grant him space in their critical columns, albeit grudgingly. And learned practitioners write erudite critical essays proclaiming that he is a big boy now.

But the western story still languishes in a state of innocuous desuetude, with none to speak a kind word in its behalf. None, that is, save a hardy soul like Bernard DeVoto who recognized in Eugene Manlove Rhodes a novelist with something to say, who knew how to say it. No. The western, our third stepchild, forlorn, neglected, and unsung, suffers from an enormous inferiority complex.

It was not always so, of course. Bret Harte's tales of the roaring mining camps are still considered Literature (note the capital "l"); Ambrose Bierce, though not concerned exclusively with the Western scene, rates two columns in the "Oxford Companion to American Literature"; Helen Hunt Jackson's "Ramona" is still required reading in many high-school English courses; and there is at least one reader who happens to think that Edna Ferber's "Cimarron" is the finest novel that gifted lady has ever written.

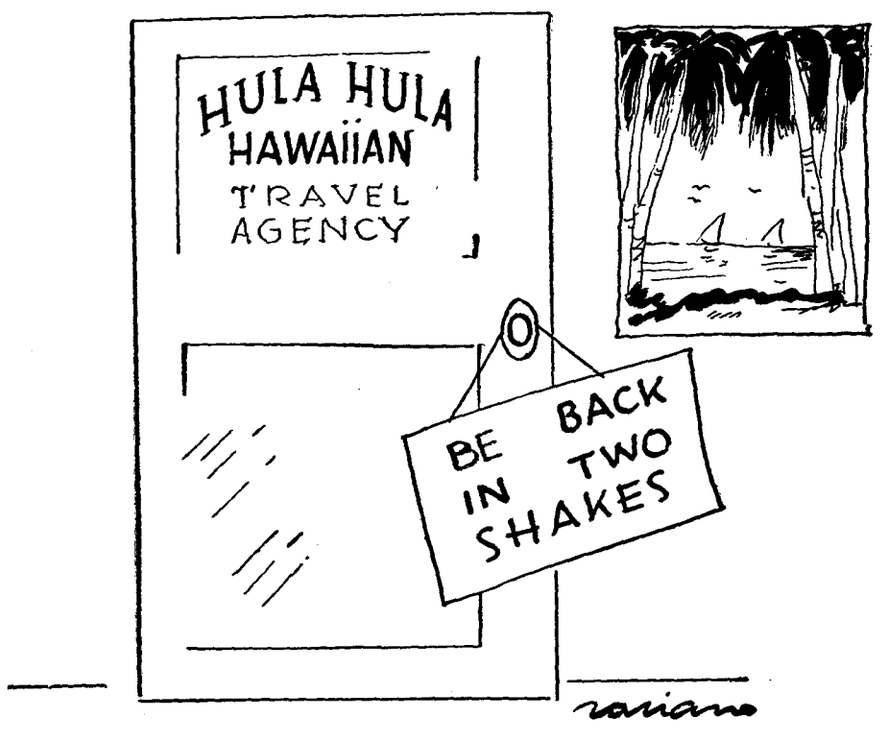
The current low estate of the western story presents us with a curious paradox. The popularity of western fiction has not waned. On the contrary. Editions for the Armed Services, Inc., the association of publishers banded together to print and distribute cheap books to the GI's during the war, reports that the demand for westerns was greater than for the combined categories of all other books. Charles Heckelmann, an editor of Better Publications, Inc., gives us some interesting figures on magazine circulation. Magazines featuring western stories exclusively now number more than thirty-five, with an impressive circulation of over 4,600,000 copies a month. The Hollywood record is no different. In 1945 there were 359 feature pictures released. Westerns accounted for fifty-nine of them, or over seventeen per cent of their total output. In other words, one out of every five or six pictures released in Hollywood last year was a western.

No. The western story has not lost its appeal.

YET BOOK publication of westerns is nearing the vanishing point. And there is so little interest in the trade for this type of fiction that ads are practically nonexistent, and a review of a new western is as rare as a Communist in Congress.

And how hath the mighty fallen? Thirty-five years ago a western ("Rider of the Purple Sage," Zane Grey, 1912) sold 750,000 copies. And Grey's complete sales reached the tidy total of 13,000,000, an average of over 200,000 copies per title.

Compare these astronomical figures



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with the sales record of westerns today.

In 1939 original editions of western novels had an average sale of 2,817 copies, and in 1944 it was only 5,523, despite the war.

What is the reason for this sharp decline? It would be an oversimplification, I believe, to dismiss it with the superficial answer that western novels have become stereotyped, imitative, and lacking in both originality and characterization, without attempting to explain why they have become so. In my opinion the answer may be found in a literary atomic bomb that exploded way back in the year 1902.

In that year Owen Wister wrote a sensationally successful novel entitled "The Virginian."

In this book Wister broke with the realistic school of Bret Harte and his followers, which had prevailed up to that time, and turned completely romantic. Perhaps the times were ripe for a change. Who can evaluate taste? Suffice it to say that Wister set a pattern. The mold was cast. The western novel became as stylized as musical comedy operetta librettos, and "when you say that, smile!" became an integral part of the American language.

CERTAINLY the success of "The Virginian" had a profound effect upon writers of the Western scene; and they have been rewriting "The Virginian" ever since.

Evidently the pattern was a good one. At least it was a popular one. The sales of western novels zoomed to new heights, reaching their peak in the fantastic totals amassed by Zane Grey and Harold Bell Wright a decade later. But there the bull market ended. Hemingway came along. The trend changed. All quiet on the western chart turned downward; until now it threatens to run right off the bottom of the page.

What is the solution? Not, I am sure, changing the classification of westerns and calling them historical novels, as some publishers are doing today. "Long Storm," by Ernest Haycox, is still a western and "Rebecca" is still a mystery, no matter how they are labeled. Crêpes Suzettes are still only good or bad pancakes.

No, the solution lies much deeper than that. The wheel of fashion is constantly turning and the pendulum of style is never still. And there is evidence lately that in westerns too, the pendulum is swinging back—away from the romantic school, back to the realistic. New forces are at work. Romantic individualism has changed its character under the influence of Freudian psychology, and is producing writers who are realistic in their attention to detail, but romantic in their concern with the inner life and a search for ideals. Such a writer is Walter Van Tilburg Clark who, in "The Ox Bow Incident," was led to expose the social evils that threaten the happiness of his characters, and thus turned realism to use in humanitarian protest.

But these are only straws in the wind. At the moment the western is indeed nothing but a stepchild of the muse, hiding neurotic bitterness by echoing Eugene Cunningham's words of lyric bravado:

> Her payrents don't like me,
> They say I'm too pore,
> They say I'm unworthy
> To enter her door. . . .

But keenly sympathetic observers may perhaps discern a faint smile on the lips of the muse. Perhaps the western may once again gain new dignity. Perhaps our stepchild may once again "enter her door" and once again come into his own.

JACK BASSETT.

Something for Mom

BELVEDERE. By Gwen Davenport. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1947. 247 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by
CATHERINE MEREDITH BROWN

HERE, at long last, is something for the ladies; a delayed, well-deserved tribute to the beleagured moms of the nation at war. High time, too. It was never easy for the woman behind the man behind the man behind the gun, but patriotism forbade complaint. Now chins can drop without censure, and the difficult domestic scene can demand a hearing.

In gay and fundamentally gallant terms Mrs. Davenport records the struggle on a particular home front in the Hummingbird Hill section of Louisville. For Tacey King, the indigenous horse and julep have been supplanted by the washing-machine and the formula. Her special talent for sculpture, backed by years of travel and training, has been sacrificed on the altar of endless housework. The day is not long enough. Husband Harry must be got off, fed and lunch-equipped, to his essential war industry. Two typical young males must be tortured into cleanliness, punctuality, and academic preparation for, alas, only a half-day of school. The strident, incessant howling of the baby girl must be silenced by special feeding. Waxed floors, laundered diapers, rationed marketing, washed dishes, and the set table lead inevitably to Harry's return, dinner, and an imprisoned evening.

Gwen Davenport writes without rancor "about the woman behind the man behind the man behind the gun."

Tacey, however, midst toil and strife, midst breakage, quarrels, and jangled nerves, has found continual solace in the pages of this very august publication. In desperation she advertises for a sitter in the personals, and *The Saturday Review* does not disappoint. Belvedere, a genius, arrives. He is content to create, to be well fed and well housed in return for lightening the load somewhat, and establishing at least a semblance of leisure. Hating children, marriage, and the home in general, he sticks to his maid's room Olympus and proves prodigious. Best-seller lists, Hollywood, and Broadway claim him. Richer than his so-called employers, we leave him offering to buy the house and hire them as a couple at enormous wages. Whether or not they turn tovarich, we are convinced of their survival.

Mrs. Davenport writes without rancor, without ever forgetting the real forces of men at war, and without any plea for pity. Her novel is simply a factual, fairly appraised segment of the conflict. It is at once witty, warm, and loving.

Harry and Tacey are joyous company, really good people, and, fortunately for the country, legion. Due to Mrs. Davenport's taste and emphasis, it would be difficult for anyone either to resent or to fail to understand their annoyances.

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Prescription for a World Viewpoint

A VAST and inspiring adventure in purposeful thinking and reading has been started in Chicago by a group of men who are setting up the machinery through which millions of Americans may soon be discussing with their neighbors many of the most important literary works of all time.

The program is a prodigious offshoot of the "Great Books" seminars of the University of Chicago. In this connection, Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins has taken a leave of absence from the university for work in the field of adult education in general, and the organization of the Great Books Foundation in particular. The aim of the Foundation is to convert a relatively confined college course into a nation-wide community project with a potential enrollment of perhaps as many as fifteen million Americans.

There are no academic requirements for individual participation. There are no "lectures" or professional "lecturers." There are no fees. There are no fixed opinions which the Foundation seeks to sponsor or impose, no rigid study guides. About the only inflexible condition is that the discussion group avoid the appearance and the habits of a classroom. What the Foundation proposes to do is to help start and operate great-books discussion groups throughout the nation to be run under community leadership.

Starting a discussion group in any community is as uncomplicated as the people of any community care to make it. As soon as a half dozen or so people decide they want it and are willing to interest some thirty to fifty of their neighbors in the project, they can become part of the program. They need not wait until the membership is completed before they can appoint their two discussion leaders who will be eligible for special training courses conducted by the Foundation. This training does not propose to make professors or lecturers in the classics out of discussion-leaders. The training is largely concerned with the techniques of group consideration of the great books—how to start a conversation rather than dominate it, how to promote stimulating and meaningful discussion of ideas, how to ask questions and to help in getting questions asked; in short, knowing something about cerebral-stretching exercises.

Still another way of starting a community group is through the sponsorship of some responsible civic organization, such as a Parent-Teacher association, a business group, a Town Hall, a club group, etc.

The raw material includes some fifty-four authors, from Homer to Freud, who account for a total of 432 titles, a fair number of which are essays or papers. The Foundation will make the readings available in booklet form at sixty cents each, although individual members are encouraged to use their own or library copies of the books under discussion.

For skeptics or those who are physiologically incapable of understanding altruism in any form, it should be stated forthwith that the Foundation hopes to make a profit from the reprints of the readings. This profit, however, represents only a fraction of the costs of carrying out the Foundation's program, the initial financing of which is being provided by the Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (largely owned by the University of Chicago), and from individual donations, of which there could and should be many more.

The project—like most far-reaching multi-dimensional plans—is not without its critics. Most of the dissenters take exception to the great-books list itself, arguing that its emphasis upon the distant past, and the corresponding slighting of great literature of the last half-century, will help to nurture esoteric and non-utilitarian reading habits at a time when the entire human race seems so lacking in a collective intelligence to meet the problems of the present.

This argument, it seems to us, is a weak one. The editors of *The Saturday Review,* who have been calling for more books as the building materials of today and tomorrow, have never held that only current books are useful in considering current problems. In the period immediately preceding the war, and during the war itself, we virtually campaigned for the widest possible reading of Thucydides as a guide to the underlying issues. Today, we are similarly engaged in campaigning for the Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Debates. There are at least a dozen titles on the great-books list which provide a vital background of perspective and historical values for meeting the issues of 1947.

Our only reservation on the great-books project—and this is more of a caveat than an objection—concerns what seems to us a potential rather than an inherent weakness in the plan. There is a danger that the list may be vested with an aura of sacred veneration amounting to literary worship. The development of an independent and critical reading faculty —one of the highest aims of any reading program—may be somewhat blunted by any extravagant homage to literary shrines. The one thing most to be avoided is *a priori* acceptance of the greatness of a book because it is included on a great-books list.

All this, however, may be a superfluous cautionary note. There is every reason to believe that the same care and sense of values that went into the building of the project thus far will guard against the development of any literary worship-complex. In the training of the discussion-leaders and in the reading materials themselves, it should be easy enough to stress that the books are to be regarded not so much as ends in themselves but as springboards into ideas.

Besides, nothing that can be said against the project is strong enough to counterbalance the fact that it is potentially capable of enabling millions of Americans to discard historical astigmatism and to prepare themselves for their present responsibilities in world citizenship. Nor are we going from the sublime to the ridiculous in saying that the plan will be well worth the effort if it does nothing more than to provide something of an antidote to the national disease of small talk. N. C.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No Westerns or Trash

SIR: In your issue of May 10 the letter from Gould Cassel from Heidelberg seems to me to offer a valuable suggestion. Experience proved during the war that an appeal for books (for USO and ARC) brought in a far too great percentage of outdated and useless books. These appeals were made, as you remember, to the general public. Readers of *SRL* are, generally speaking, selective and discriminating in their interest in books. Could a "channel" be arranged and books contributed through your audience which would fulfill the need—at least to some extent?

I base this suggestion on an "order" we of the Aiken County Chapter of the Red Cross filled for the C. O. of a tactical-reconnaissance squadron group who asked for 600 books to include "nothing older than a year, no westerns, no trash, and a minimum of 'blood'." We collected biographies, novels of so-called social significance, political and historical books—almost all recently published. The letters we received from officers and men of the group from an advance post in China were more than gratifying.

Surely a majority of your readers would gladly send a few books each which, added together, would make a very considerable and useful means with which to present a picture of the United States to the book-hungry people of Germany!

ELEANOR WILDS.

Aiken, S. C.

Editor's Note: SRL *supports the "channel" suggested below in response to Miss Wilds's challenge.*

War Devastated Libraries

SIR: Will a million and a quarter books help to fill the "intellectual vacuum" in Europe which Mr. Emil Lengyel describes so well in the May 17 issue of *The Saturday Review*? If so, Mr. Lengyel and others who are interested will find a partial answer to his appeal for help in the work of the American Book Center for War Devastated Libraries, a private, non-governmental agency.

The American Book Center, sponsored by twelve national library associations, has, in fifteen months of operations, distributed more than 800,000 highly selected volumes of books and periodicals to libraries in the war-torn countries of Europe and Asia. These volumes are almost exclusively American publications. While the bulk of this material has been shipped to committees in the various countries for distribution according to the needs of the libraries, many thousands of volumes have been accepted from institutions and individuals for shipment to specific libraries abroad.

Those of us who have been in touch with hundreds of librarians throughout the world can speak as strongly as does Mr. Lengyel about the intellectual hunger of our colleagues abroad. (The American Book Center, in this program which will close at the end of 1947, will be able to ship less than one per cent of the number of volumes destroyed in the war!)

If you would aid a voluntary effort, you may ship your printed materials to any war-torn country through the American Book Center. For shipping instructions write to the American Book Center, c/o the Library of Congress, Washington 25, D. C.

LAURENCE J. KIPP.

Washington, D. C.

SIR: Methinks, Mr. Lengyel prematurely pictures Europe as a poor relation and greatly overrates the value of American books to regenerate her. Our books are not the panacea to heal Europe's intellect, just as our bread cannot fill European stomachs. No doubt, our books would be welcome, but Europe has to find her own soul. Shoveling in American ersatz, which is not even curing us, is no substitute. It may be Europe is down, like ancient Athens went down. Reading Plato never brought it back. Books do not produce souls. If Europe still has a soul, she does not need American books for her "re-education." If she, like Athens, lost it, no books can help her.

VYTOLD SIRVYDAS.

Rouses Point, N. Y.

Italian "Literary Occupation"

SIR: Of interest in the book world is the situation in Italy. I have translated and you are authorized to quote the enclosed little story from *L'Ultima*, a monthly review of poetry and thought, published in Florence since January 25, 1946. During my military sojourn in Italy I had occasion to meet Dr. Mario Gozzini and other writers of the magazine.

We are told that the publisher Mondadori (Milan) has bought the rights for Italy of a thousand English and American novels. An army of translators is preparing the versions which shortly will flood Italian bookstores. We should be curious to know the opinion of Italian writers on this "literary occupation" which is added to the many other "occupations" of which we are witnesses in a country composed in great part of unemployed.

THEODORE GARVEY.

Detroit, Mich.

Fadiman a Hater?

SIR: May I express agreement with the radio-active Mr. Fadiman [*SRL* May 24] that race prejudice makes dullards out of both "whites" and "blacks," and that it involves them in endless, futile childishness. As an instance in point, there is Mr. Fadiman's own indefatigable and apparently morbid prejudice against what he calls "Germans." Only intolerable *bores* continue thumping empty tubs, and Mr. Fadiman's thumping has been a bore for too many years.

Incidentally, I agree with the admirable Clifton that "blacks" and "whites" have no scientific meaning, as little, in fact, as "German" or "Jew" or "American" in the nomenclature of hatred suggested by Hitlers and Fadimans.

Shall we draw the inevitable conclusion that those who live in glass houses ought not to take baths in broad daylight, or shall we merely mention that stuff about motes and beams in eyes?

LESLIE EVAN SCHLYTTER.

Chicago, Ill.

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A Pattern for Post-war Publishing

PEOPLE HAVE STOPPED TRYING TO EAT BOOKS AND HAVE BEGUN TO READ THEM.

When we were at war and you couldn't buy steak or a tire or a radio tube, many people bought books instead. This was a good thing. Books made new friends, but now some of the new readers are going back to sirloin and Jennifer Jones; book sales are falling. Yet people who really read are buying books — perhaps more books than ever. This postwar market is not for any book; it is for the books with rich content. It is for books to read twice. With book price reluctantly following other prices upward, that is perhaps the truly logical economy.

Some ten years ago Houghton Mifflin Company published a very good and serious book PATTERNS OF CULTURE by Ruth Benedict. It was a book that through a study of certain simple cultures explained some of the causes of discord in the world. It was praised by the critics; it became an important symbol for those who read it, and during the decade at three dollars the company has sold some 7000 copies. Recently, however, in the Pelican book series at 25c, it has sold over 102,000 copies — that is an indication of the temper of this postwar publishing market. Many books planned for publication during the summer fit into this pattern.

Do you remember THE STRATEGY OF TERROR by Edmond Taylor, a profound prophetic book that was published during the phony war and which foretold the course of German strategy and German thinking. We shall publish his new book, RICHER BY ASIA, in July for $3.00. Mr. Taylor spent much of his war service in India, and the cultures of India seemed to him a mystery to be comprehended. As he analyzed German thinking, he has analyzed Eastern thinking and the effects of Indian climate and Indian cultures on Western men. Though his missions were many and dangerous, his book is about missions of the mind, for in the East he found answers to many questions the West is asking. This book cannot be sold now or soon in a low-priced edition, for such books must be tested by the bellwethers of the reading world before the risks of the low-priced markets can be undertaken.

In 1933 Houghton Mifflin published MEIN KAMPF. It was a blueprint for horror. This summer we will publish a book, TO THE BITTER END, that looks back upon the planners of that horror and studies the process by which the creators of chaos were destroyed by their own poisons. Hans B. Gisevius, a chief among anti-Nazi Germans, privy to all the plans of Nazi management throughout the war, studies the power that nearly corrupted a world. *August.* $4.00

That American literature is now receiving the recognition and the consideration it deserves is partly due to the efforts of Henry Seidel Canby. AMERICAN MEMOIR is his penetrating social commentary, offering a history of the 20's and 30's in terms of the literary growth of those decades. Here are the reminiscences of Willa Cather, Ellen Glasgow, Sinclair Lewis, the Benets, Elinor Wylie, Amy Lowell, Gertrude Stein, Thornton Wilder, Hemingway, and Dos Passos, the lively story of the founding of *The Saturday Review of Literature* and The Book-of-the-Month Club, the crowded productive years between the wars. To give these years perspective, two of Mr. Canby's earlier books, condensed and revised, THE AGE OF CONFIDENCE and ALMA MATER, are included. *August.* $5.00

Ben Ames Williams' new novel, HOUSE DIVIDED, is not an ordinary novel. It is as long as five ordinary novels, but it is none-the-less one tightly woven unit. It follows an American family, the Currains, through four generations. It moves with the slow engrossing pace of life itself. To read it is to have

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prolonged your life backwards for a hundred years and to bring back to today not a knowledge of history, but an experience of great human emotions, a knowledge of the course of great ambitions and great sacrifices that continue and mount today. The book closes with the close of the Civil War, and with the house divided once more a house united, held shakily together with new staging. It is a book that America will want to remember and cherish and return to generation after generation. *August.* $5.00

A few years ago we introduced a new writer — Hobert Douglas Skidmore. His book, VALLEY OF THE SKY, was one of the first important fictional records of our war in the air. He now proves himself much more than a sensitive recorder of heroic experience. His new book, DISTURB NOT OUR DREAMS, is an unusual and subtle comedy of love and shows its author to be an artist in character and a serious element in American fictional writing. *July.* $2.50

When virgin timber is cleared, rank scrub springs up, and a few aged trees are left wondering who will be the forest now. That is how the old people of Westwick felt, looking back to its pioneer days and forward at their young people, trying to find a place in this too modern world that encroached upon the village. Wallace Stegner's SECOND GROWTH is a picture of men trying to adapt the integrity of the old to the fierce pressure of the new. *July.* $2.75

Another book has been added to the Peterson Field Guide Series, A FIELD GUIDE TO THE SHELLS by Percy A. Morris. This guide covers all the shells that can be found on our eastern seaboard from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Over 400 shells are illustrated, 102 in full color. A FIELD GUIDE TO THE SHELLS follows the revised and expanded FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS by Roger Tory Peterson. This is the only guide to all the eastern birds — land birds, water birds, and birds of prey — 500 species are shown in color, and there are over 1000 drawings in all. These books and the ones to follow in the Peterson-edited series are convenient, accurate, and complete guides to the natural world in which we live.

September. $3.50

The face of a country is as important as the people in it for it often forms those people. The editors of *Look* magazine, realizing how little Americans know about their own country, have edited the *Look at America series* which began with the large volume, LOOK AT AMERICA, published last fall. Since then we have published regional guides to the Southwest and New England and are planning to publish guides to the Central Northwest, the South, and the Midwest during this year. These regional guides, with photographs on nearly every page, their lists of events, their recreational directories, their maps and their fact-crammed texts are books for the stay-at-home to reminisce over or to use as plans for future trips, and they are indispensable to the traveler in America. $5.00

Sherwood Anderson is one of the great figures in American writing following directly in the line of Zola. He wrote about the little things in the life of the people he knew and because all we can see of life at one time is the little things, his stories are the truest kind of commentary. The late Paul Rosenfeld has collected in THE SHERWOOD ANDERSON READER more of Anderson's stories than have ever been previously published in one volume. Roughly three-quarters of it is made up of material not available elsewhere now — from out-of-print books, magazine publications, limited editions, or unpublished manuscripts. The book includes a biographical sketch of Anderson and a brilliant critical estimate of his work by the editor, a friend of Anderson's throughout his writing life.

September. $5.00

The books described on these pages are for people with specific intellectual preoccupations and for those who really understand the value of reading. They are priced so as to give a maximum of reading for the dollar. In this respect we have in the case of some books got below the prewar norm. We have tried to make the books the newest and the best for the least.

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Conversation Piece

THE HIDDEN DAMAGE. By James Stern. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co. 1947. 406 pp. $4.

Reviewed by SAUL K. PADOVER

WHEN the war was over in Germany the War Department sent a number of interrogators and translators to make a survey of the bombing damage which our Air Force had inflicted on German cities. Irish-born James Stern was one of the interrogators. His particular team worked in Darmstadt, Stuttgart, Munich, Kempten, and around Nuremberg. In "The Hidden Damage" he is trying to tell a little of what he discovered.

Unfortunately, despite his fine narrative skill, the author tells us nothing new or unusual about Germany. Stern had lived in Germany before the war and knew the language well enough to have been a translator of German novels. Stephen Spender, under comparable conditions and linguistic facility, came out of Germany with penetrating impressions which he reported sensitively in his "European Witness." Stern, on the other hand, concentrated so much on himself, his personal reactions, and the words that he uttered on all occasions, that he neglected to do a clean, objective job of reporting. Perhaps that was not his intention, however. The fact is that, except for the thirty pages of index, most of the book is a conversation piece between the author and others, a number of them Germans.

"The Hidden Damage" tries to be an autobiography in form, a novel in treatment, and a report in background, and the reader is at a loss as to how to take it. Moreover, in his effort to be novelistic, Mr. Stern writes as if several million men in uniform had not preceded him, as if he were reporting a mysterious new world, rather than one that had already been thoroughly explored and written about by legions of able correspondents.

There are inexplicably minor details, such as eggs and bacon for breakfast and the number of the room in his hotel. This is what happened to him at Bad Nauheim upon arrival:

> I found myself and my baggage in a small elevator with a plush seat. A corporal was conducting me slowly upwards to the third floor. Number 88 was in a corner off a wide corridor. A key was already in the door; but the room had double doors. I pushed the second one open and stood still on the threshold with my mouth open. . . .
>
> On my left were two beds covered in spotless linen and yellow eiderdowns; beyond them a writing table and chair. . . .

And so forth, and so on.

Apart from piles of trivia, there are miles of quite unimportant dialogue —from "*Guten Morgen*" to "thank you, sir."

The recorded conversations between the author and his colleagues are about the same:

> "Hi, Jim!" Dudley said, as Frank moved up alongside. "You missed seeing us nearly go into the ditch!"
>
> "What happened?"
>
> "At that sign post," said Frank, "where it said: Bad Toelz—Dudley screamed, 'Look out, Frank! Bad curve!'"
>
> "Ha! Ha! Ha!" squealed Dudley.

This may, of course, be good and proper writing in a novel or even an autobiography. But the publisher's jacket announces that "The Hidden Damage" is "the human story of the spiritual damage suffered by the plain people of Western Europe during six years of war." Whatever it is, it is not that. It should be read as quite an interesting novelized autobiography.

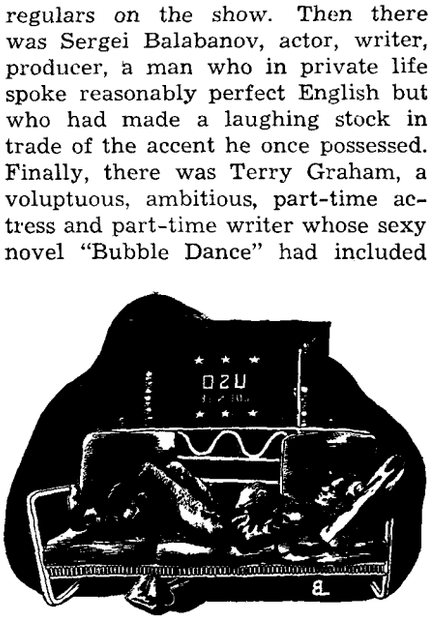
Chunks of Culture

THE LONG PURSUIT. By Joseph Freeman. New York: Rinehart & Co. 1947. 310 pp. $3.

Reviewed by MERLE MILLER

SHORTLY after the European war ended, Emory Flush of Hollywood took the entire troop of his "Five Star Chat" on a USO tour of Europe, the ostensible purpose of which was to entertain the millions of GI's awaiting a return to the United States and discharge. Almost everybody had seen and applauded the movie shorts in which the three regulars and the guests of the "Chat" dish out culture in stimulating, digestible chunks; and, of course, everyone knew the principal performers.

There was the bearded Mark Bingham, essayist, critic, conversationalist, and witty master-of-ceremonies; and the Snowden twins, Luther, the well-known newspaperman and poet, and Chris, once an all-American quarterback and later a professor of Elizabethan literature. These were the regulars on the show. Then there was Sergei Balabanov, actor, writer, producer, a man who in private life spoke reasonably perfect English but who had made a laughing stock in trade of the accent he once possessed. Finally, there was Terry Graham, a voluptuous, ambitious, part-time actress and part-time writer whose sexy novel "Bubble Dance" had included



enough seduction to make it an overwhelmingly successful best seller.

A discerning reader who also listens to the radio occasionally might wonder if there isn't a disturbing similarity between Mr. Freeman's fictional characters and the real-life participants in a certain radio program which also dishes out culture in stimulating, digestible chunks. But Mr. Freeman denies it with the usual disclaimer.

And surely no person, living or dead, would want to be confused with such a distasteful, psychopathic egomaniac as Emory Flush, who brought his performers to Europe not to entertain the GI's but to pursue the beautiful Lee Russell, an Army nurse he had met and fallen in love with in Hollywood; and no one would want to be thought similar to Walter Alcock, Flush's sniveling brother-in-law who had lost an eye in a drunken automobile accident for which Flush was responsible.

No. Mr. Freeman's book must be judged as a novel; he seems to be saying something about modern society, about the conditions which produce men like Flush. Just what he is saying is never clear, and the way in which he says it is confusing. At times he seems to be writing a satire, and surely that is the form with which a group of people so preposterously unbelievable to most of us should be treated, but, more often, Mr. Freeman is very, very serious. And, I'm afraid, he has written a very, very dull book, despite the never-ending concern with sex of Terry and the handsome, violin-playing Lieut. Johnny Nikolides, the Army's liaison officer with the "Chat."

Mr. Freeman has written, among other books, the novel "Never Call Retreat," a major work of fiction. "The Long Pursuit" is a major disappointment.

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Pushkin, Gogol, et al.

AN INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN LITERATURE. By Helen Muchnic. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 272 pp. $3.

Reviewed by ERNEST J. SIMMONS

THE historian of a foreign literature, as of a foreign country, has a special advantage—his critical baggage is ordinarily not cluttered up by a nationalist heritage or the bric-a-brac of traditional preferences. If he escapes being more native than the natives—always a danger in acquiring an alien culture—his advantage can result in a salutary objectivity of treatment. This was one of the peculiar virtues of the Frenchman Taine on English literature and of the Englishman Saintsbury on French literature. And it is very definitely the virtue of Professor Muchnic on Russian literature. Though Russian born, her whole training and orientation are American. Russian literary historians have made a battlefield of the subject, and though their campaigns have sometimes been brilliant, a foreign reader often needs a relief map of native passions and prejudices to follow the attacks with understanding. The only extensive works written in English on Russian literary history are Mirsky's two books, and these, though often wonderfully penetrating in their critical judgments, are nevertheless guilty of the faults mentioned above, and largely because the author was a Russian.

It should be mentioned, however, that Professor Muchnic's modest study is not intended to be literary history in the formal sense. The scope is severely limited; dates and vital statistics are sparingly used; and that final homage to higher criticism is duly paid—the absence of an index. In certain respects, the book recalls to mind Maurice Baring's old "Landmarks in Russian Literature." If it lacks the charming urbanity, lucid style, and unlabored critical thinking of this little classic in the field, it has very substantial compensations to offer to readers and students of Russian literature.

After an introduction, in which an interesting effort is made to "place" Russian literature against the background of Western European literature, the author devotes two chapters to the earlier works of Russian literature. This is not so much a concession to formal literary history as to the author's own special interests, and perhaps as a result, these chapters are among the best contributions of the book. The treatment of Russian folk literature is perceptive, and the author's enthusiasm for it is contagious. Further, the study of "The Lay of the Host of Igor," the finest extant narrative poem of old Russia, provides, even in its brief scope, the most understanding critical introduction to this monument in English.

The remaining chapters of the book take up in the following order Pushkin, Gogol, Turgeniev, Dostoievsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov. Here nice proportions in treatment and uniformity of method stumble. Over-all critical interpretation of an author's total achievement varies with the traditional survey method of literary history in which a masterpiece may be accorded only a page or two. Some of the subtle irony and nuance is missed in the résumé of "Eugene Onegin," and one is a little surprised to find the point of this great poem reduced to a "problem of freedom." And one is even more surprised to learn that "hatred" rather than a kind of Sternian comic afflatus dominates much of the work of Gogol, and that "the impression he creates is that of a galvanized corpse, magnificent for all its deadness. . . ."

At times a curious cleavage seems to exist between the critical analysis of an author's work and subsequent generalizations on his creative process and philosophy of life. In the face of the analysis of "The Brothers Karamazov," for example, one is puzzled by the judgment that follows that Dostoievsky's "work has a unity of lyric statement; but it is more objective than even Pushkin's or Flaubert's" only to be followed on the next page by "His [Dostoievsky's] thought is passionate, and the events of his novels are the images in which he thinks. . . . Even his journalistic discussions about the nature and the destiny of Russia are, in a sense, projections of his personal experience." To say, as Professor Muchnic does, that Dostoievsky "spent his whole life proving that Christ would not have joined the socialist movement," is to miss the solution of one aspect of his essential ideological dualism that Dostoievsky sought for, namely, the union of Christianity and socialism.

And in a similar fashion the following statement betrays a misunderstanding of Tolstoy's whole moral philosophy of life: "He wants to give men a religion that will codify what they already know and live by. . . ." It was precisely Tolstoy's conviction that men did not "live by" the Christianity they professed, and that this failure to practise what they believed had brought about most of the evil in the world.

The author's whole critical pattern of thought is obscured by overwriting, but if one takes the chapters separately, each, with the exception of the one on Turgeniev, is a self-contained unit of literary interpretation that informs and illuminates the subject treated. Professor Muchnic's approach is fresh and original. She has done her own thinking on these masterpieces of Russian literature, and her wide-ranging knowledge of French, English, and American literature has enabled her, through pointed contrasts and comparisons, to make these Russian writers and their works more understandable and meaningful to American readers.

—From "The Brothers Karamazov."

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Bard of Ayr

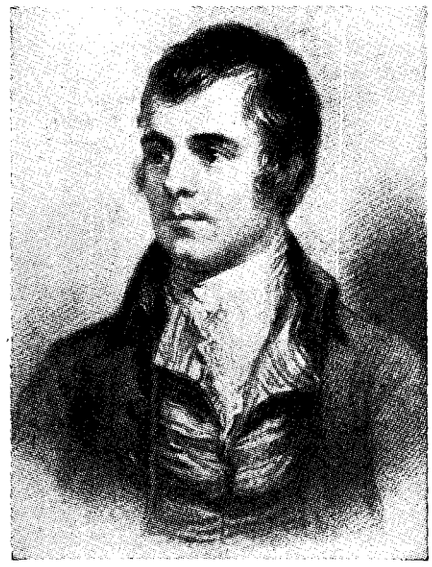
THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY. By James Barke. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 348 pp. $3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

IT WOULD seem that at last Robert Burns, Scotia's darling, had found the proper interpreter. James Barke is Scots to the core, a Galloway man writing of the man of Ayr, and modestly disclaims any pretensions to be a biographer. He is, he says,—and as is quite apparent—a novelist. One may add that he is a vivid, sensitive, and lusty one. But he knows the obligations of a novelist when dealing with real people as they lived. "Fiction is not concerned with conclusions; but in so far as it can claim to be historical it must rear its creative edifice on solid factual foundation." Mr. Barke pays tribute to James C. Dick's monumental "The Songs of Robert Burns," and to old Scots editors and new American scholars, remarking on the brilliance of the latter and on the fact that the largest collection of Burns manuscripts in the world is in our own Morgan Library.

But it is as a novel that this present book should be read. It carries the life of Robert Burns up to the time when he and his brother Gilbert began to farm at Mossgiel, after the death of their father. In that second period Burns wrote "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Jolly Beggars," "To a Mouse," etc. Apparently Mr. Barke contemplates four novels on Burns which, when completed, will form a work to be called "Immortal Memory." The novel to follow the present one will doubtless culminate with the success of the Kilmarnock edition of Burns's poems and his conquest of Edinburgh. It is to be entitled "The Song in the Green Thorn Tree." If Mr. Barke does complete his ambitious project, no other great poet will ever have had such a memorial in fiction.

Beyond cavil Robert Burns was a great poet. He was a great singer and a great exploiter of the resources of his native tongue. The range of his mind was great in its joy of life and its broad tolerance, in its clear vision of man's inhumanity to man, in its gift for honest scorn. How far poetry has moved, in its methods and objectives, since Burns poured new life, love, and merriment into old Scots airs, and sang like a laverock above the plough! This was poetry for a people, as there has been for a people no such poetry since. And the best of the music still defies death.



—*From "Pictured Story of English Literature."*

"The range of Robert Burns's mind was great in its joy of life [and] its gift for honest scorn."

But few of us know much concerning the actual conditions of life for the cotter in the Scotland of Burns's day, and Mr. Barke has recreated that life for us with a rich, unsparing wealth of detail. The people, few of them fictional, emerge in the round. The poet's father, a man of extraordinary energy of the spirit and unremitting toil, is unforgettable. The hard farm life on the sour soil, the backbreaking labor, the terrible squalor of the vennels in the town of Irvine to which Robert repaired to learn the combing of flax, the rigid religious code contending with the leaping blood of youth, the friends and enemies, the first pressures of literature (Mackenzie's "The Man of Feeling," the poems of Fergusson, the earlier influence of Pope and Shenstone), the poet's attitude toward love and the lasses (in this earlier phase so much more continent and moral than is casually believed, yet with a healthy understanding of the flesh), such salient characters as John Rankine, the farmer of Adamhill, staunch friend to the poet, and Jean Glover the strolling player who initiated the bard into the arts of love, "first, second and third degrees—wi' full ritual and all the honors." These matters—together with freemasonry, the bachelors' debating club, and the relentless persecution of the father by David MacLure, the flint-hearted merchant of Ayr—who is finally confounded too late to save William Burns—these and many other vital occurrences fill a narrative whose five parts have titled divisions (not chapters) that may be long or short, but are always of superior fabric, and increasingly thrust the drama of the story forward. The lasses, as different as Alison Begbie from Jean Glover, as Jean Glover from Jean Gardner, and as any from the earth spirit of Annie Rankine who inspired so fine a love song; the brothers and sisters; the Tarbolton lads; the medical-student and blue-eyed sailor friends of the town; all are alive and natural. Perhaps Mr. Barke's descriptive gift may be indicated by this one paragraph:

> And now the white smudge of a moth fluttered in the coarse grass; a sudden snipe ricocheted from its early rest; maukin and mappy swiveled an ear and drummed a warning on the velvet nibbled turf; across the dew-drenched earth came the slow cry of the herd-boy gathering the cattle-beasts to the closure; and though a lone peewit battered itself into an erratic frenzy against hidden danger and an owl screamed from the topmost branch of a stunted oak, yet the hushed breath of the evening smoothed and caressed every sound back into the silence. . . .

That is nature not merely written about but carefully observed. Mr. Barke uses dialect as he chooses, but even unfamiliar Scots words are not hard to find meaning for in their proper context. The dialect serves to give flavor; to this reviewer at least it is rightfully there. The book is a thorough pleasure to read.

Copper Beeches

By Padraic Colum

TALMUDIC in their alienness
The Copper Beeches are beside
The Willow, Ash and Sycamore—
Dark, ponderous trees.

The Willow, Ash and Sycamore
Profess the green. And them beside,
With branches close around dark stems
And leaves like burnished metal, dark—
Unordained trees.

Alien as minds that pondered on
The letters twelve and forty-two,
And in their inner depths pronounced
The name that's figured in the great
Tetragrammaton.

The Copper Beeches spread beside
The Willow, Ash and Sycamore,
Alien, but more—discordant they—
Discordant as the metal clang
Against the lutes, the flutes, the chimes—
Dark ponderous trees!

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Crime Without Even Pique

THE DEVIL AT WESTEASE. By V. Sackville-West. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 219 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

LIKE many authors who have made reputations in other fields, Miss Sackville-West has been tempted by the possibilities of "the novel of mystery and suspense," to quote the jacket; and like many other writers today, she is trying to enlarge the field of the detective story. Unfortunately, those who have admired her exquisite style and serene reflectiveness in other books will feel that she has not succeeded well in either venture. She has tried to produce the Perfect Crime; and she has set forth the truly shocking idea that a man whose work is of sufficient importance to humanity ought to be allowed one murder just for amusement, as the common law allows a dog one. (Kingsley, indeed, suggested that the criminal lunatics of his time should be kept in country-houses and allowed to shoot one keeper a week, "if blackgame is scarce," but then his suggestion was wrote sarcastical.)

Now, whatever may be thought of Miss Sackville-West's philosophy, any connoisseur of murder as one of the fine arts must protest that her Perfect Crime is no such thing. In the first place, as the murderer says toward the end, he had no motive except a desire to see if the thing could be done; the only reason he chose the saintly vicar as his victim was that the vicar was "small and weak and would be easily overwhelmed." Now, a murder without a motive can never be a Perfect Crime, since it is too easy; all you need is a dark night and a lead pipe. Jack the Ripper proved that, when he murdered half a dozen women on the streets and went free because he had no sane motive; and there is little doubt that Leopold and Loeb would not have been detected if they had not adulterated the pure joy of sadism with the vulgar motive of blackmail. In the second place, having resolved on a crime which needed no preparation at all, the murderer makes preparations so fantastically elaborate that I, who am a perfect Watson, knew what he was up to long before the murder was committed. (I am a perfect Watson, but I have read my "Father Brown.")

His crime, however, baffles every one in the book except young Roger Liddiard, who tells the story. He belatedly divines the truth, and taxes the murderer with it; to which the murderer replies in effect:

> You have a powerful reason to spare me, since the work that I shall do is of importance to posterity; and you have no reason to denounce me, since I will never commit another murder; I committed this only to prove that it could be done; now that I have proved it, I have no need to commit another.

And Liddiard, I am deeply grieved to say, assents to this reasoning, and lets him off. That is not quite the end; the publishers promise "a surprise ending after the surprise ending." Since I have perhaps given away too much already, I will only say of the second ending that the surprise is mild. But I could easily write a third surprise ending, and at the same time demonstrate the fallacy of the murderer's reasoning. Sooner or later, the murderer is going to say:

> My murder of the vicar was not the Perfect Crime, because (a) I had no motive; (b) it was in fact detected by Liddiard. But if I bump off Liddiard, I shall have a motive (since he always might change his mind, and I am not wholly safe while he is alive), and I may be able to profit by experience and bring that off undetected.

In fact, it now occurs to me, the murderer may have committed the first crime only to bait the trap for the second. So (to continue my third ending) the murderer murders the trusting, posterity-conscious Liddiard. And serves him right.

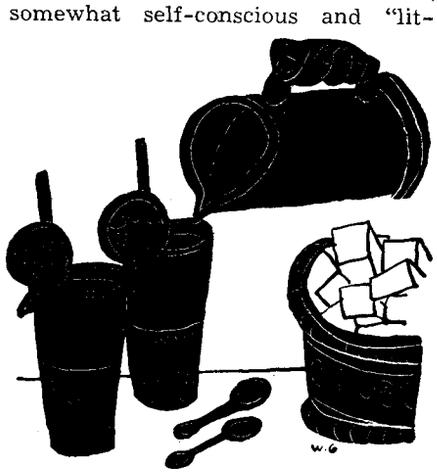
Whimsy from Boston to Poland

FLAW DEXTER. By T. E. Doremus. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1947. 297 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

IT IS difficult to know how to judge whimsy, especially when whimsy purports to show Deep Significance. You can't say that the plot is weak or improbable, because a whimsical plot doesn't have to be credible or strong. You can't remark of such and such a character that his actions are eccentric or his psychology preposterous, since by definition his actions are supposed to be eccentric and his psychology is at the mercy of the author. And you can't very well comment on point of view or other aspects of fictional technique because, since the days of E. T. A. Hoffmann, in the world of fantasy anything, including point of view, is likely to fade into anything else. And so you are reduced to subjective impressions.

"Flaw Dexter" purports to be a "stinging satire on the literary life," which readers "with a taste for refined satire" will like. I should say that the novel is a moderately successful exercise in whimsical fiction, somewhat self-conscious and "literary" in the wrong sense of the word, but saved for readability by a bright, flowing style and endless capacity for verbal incongruities. It takes me back to the days of "The Tattooed Countess" and "The Venetian Glass Nephew," except that it has been written after Kafka and not before and except that in the whirling kaleidoscope of improbabilities there is dimly visible a pathetic father-son relationship, the father being an ageing novelist and the son a thoroughly interesting, grumpy young man. The plot ranges from Boston to Poland, where in the town of Sopot a nameless general seems to have a good deal to do with nocturnal mayhem and an absconding poet turns up as his aide. The fact that the poet promises to return to mother under the pressure of Hutcliffe (the novelist) may or may not have deep psychological significance —father fixation and all that.



Well, the Shandean novel, in which one thing suggests another, has its view of human life as anarchy, genial or otherwise, and I suppose "Flaw Dexter" is an exercise in an existentialist set of values. We are all, the author seems to say, fundamentally absurd. This is defensible as metaphysics and may be defensible as literature, provided it comes off. But the most primitive demand laid upon the novel is the demand for narrative, which even "Tristram Shandy" fulfills; and in trying to follow the narrative in "Flaw Dexter" I, for one, kept barking my shins over the details. "Flaw Dexter" is emphatically not the novel *démeublé*, which Willa Cather demanded; and one can only remark that if this book represents the younger generation knocking at the door, they are curiously like the fantasts of the Twenties.

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BOOKED for TRAVEL

—Gabriel D. Hackett.

From France: An Invitation—"a young blonde or an old cathedral."

LE BEAU PAYS

ALL THE BEST IN FRANCE. By Sydney Clark. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1947. 355 *pp.* + *Index.* $3.50.

PARIS. By Fritz Henle and Elliot Paul. New York: Ziff-Davis Publishing Co. 1947. 111 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by BERNARD FRIZELL

THE number of things an American tourist can do in Paris is limited only by the amount of time he has to spend in the city that is "all things to all men." A spectacular variety is offered by *la ville lumière*, ranging from the commercialized display of the Body Beautiful in Montmartre to the tranquil presence of Notre Dame on the Ile de la Cité. Whether the tourist wants to gaze on a young blonde or an old cathedral (or both) Sydney Clark's unpretentious and knowledgeable book will help him. A genial and enthusiastic guide, Mr. Clark has turned out "All the Best in France," a book calculated to aid American tourists see and do a maximum in Paris and the provinces in a minimum of time.

The book is packed with extremely useful information about the technicalities of travel in France. It tells you what you ought to know about tipping, riding in trains, or driving a car along tree-lined French roads. Interspersed with friendly, readable comments on Mr. Clark's experiences and prepossessions, the book touches on the highlights for tourists in Paris and the provinces. Apparently to add a modicum of historical appreciation to the treasures of France, Mr. Clark has also telescoped the history of that nation into a few chapters of snappy gossip.

Apart from any of the information that Mr. Clark may impart, he is apt to infect the reader with his love for things Parisian. He has been seduced—like so many of us—by the French way of eating, drinking, and café-sitting. He is even pro-*bidet* and assures the haughty and supercilious that the porcelain mount of this gem of plumbing practicality "can be mastered in a single effort."

* * *

PARIS," a thin book of photographs by Fritz Henle with text by Elliot Paul, is less about Paris than the people of that city. The photographs were taken before the war—many of them obviously long before. It is difficult to escape the feeling that the excuse for the book was not so much that Mr. Henle had a theme as that he had some old pictures lying around that he wanted to get between covers.

Nevertheless, the pictures do show an aspect of Paris that few Americans know. They show the common people. In addition to shooting some effective and nostalgic scenes of the city, Mr. Henle has tellingly focussed his camera on a series of heads. The result is a number of excellent character studies, mainly of aging, simple folk. One particularly fine study is that of a gray-haired woman whose square-boned, sculpturesque face bears an expression of grief and suffering that beggars description. In pictures like this one Mr. Henle conveys a kind of truth unique to the camera. They are enough to disabuse one of the misconceptions that all Frenchmen are dandies and all French women are frivolous.

Truth is somewhat less happily conveyed in Mr. Paul's text. Although Mr. Paul's heart is no doubt in the right place, he cannot resist the facile exaggerations characteristic of his manner of romantic rumination. "French tradeswomen," he solemnly informs us for example, "often have to submit to—or resist—affectionate advances from male customers who desire them from sheer gratitude on account of the excellent goods they sell." It can be said categorically that it is a rare Frenchman who confuses his passion for goat cheese with the woman who serves it.

Bernard Frizell studied and freelanced in pre-war Paris, invaded southern France with the Psychological Warfare Branch, is now Paris correspondent for Time *and* Life.

Recommended Reading

SO YOU'RE GOING TO FRANCE. By Clara Laughlin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1937. 587 *pp.* $5.

SO YOU'RE GOING TO PARIS. The same. 1938. 421 *pp.* $3.

(Two of a series of pre-war guides by the owner of a New York travel agency. New edition due next spring.)

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE 1947 *GUIDE TO EUROPE. Edited by Herbert Kupferberg. New York:* New York Herald Tribune. 1947. 207 *pp.* $1.

(Paper-bound collection of essays, mostly about France.)

A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO FRANCE. By Stuart Murray. New York: Sheridan House. $2.50.

(An oft-deferred post-war study by an explorer, travel writer, travelogue producer and author of "Fun at Sea," due in September.)

A Note on France

OF France's fifty-million Frenchmen, no less than a million and a half make their living in tourism. This imposing array of innkeepers, taxi drivers, tour guides, railway conductors, bellhops, chambermaids, club-owners, and postcard vendors have hacked away at the ruins and residue of the oppression with considerable gusto. It is today, three years after the invasion, a curious irony that France is ready to receive more

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tourists than there is transportation available to ferry them abroad.

The ill-starred fate of the *Normandie* has had echoes through the whole French merchant fleet. The old *Europa,* turned over to France as part of German reparations, hoisted the tri-color, was renamed *La Liberté,* and promptly sank in the harbor of Le Havre. She has been refloated again, but it will be many months before she enters the Atlantic run. The *Ile de France,* pre-war gala wagon, has been plying poilus to Indo-China, and is now being refitted. Until the *De Grasse* rejoins the fleet in mid-July, the honor of the French marine is being maintained by two reconditioned ships named, with a certain lack of respect for French heritage, the *Wisconsin* and the *Oregon.* The two ships plough the ocean in anywhere from ten to fourteen days, a trip that requires Air France or any of the other transatlantic air carriers slightly over sixteen hours. But plane passage during the summer will be about as tight as ship space, and both are as hard to find as a four-room apartment.

Word comes from abroad that the situation on land is not nearly so bad. There is even a hopeful note about the improvement of the coffee, and with it an admonition to avoid what is known as "national coffee," a rather unhappy substitute. According to our advices, travelers should find fruit in the south, butter most anywhere, soap in a number of places, toilet tissue throughout. The well-known restaurants and night spots in Paris are high, but no more expensive than their counterparts here. The Folies Bergère grinds on, and one can still see an authentic can-can at the Bal Tabarin. Most American movies are two or three years old, and we have had a distracting report that a spot check conducted in Paris before her arrival there recently revealed an alarmingly small number of people who had ever heard of Rita Hayworth.

No doubt about it, there is some ill humor anent the appetite of American tourists, welling up, we judge, from some of the Frenchmen who are not, in one way or another, making a living from the tourists. Generally, however, the easy-going, informal, slouchy air of France, which was always its lure for Americans, has in no way been hastened, altered, or impaired. A gentleman we know recently had reservations from Paris to Megeve, and was assigned to a lower in a closed compartment that had two berths. Nobody arrived to claim the upper until two minutes before the train departed, when a handsome blonde lady opened the door and walked in. Our man spoke no French and the lady no English, and so the fellow was left to his unilingual thoughts. By means of some gesticulative terms of the international sign language the lady finally conveyed her intended departure from the train by 5 a.m. She thereby won the right to his lower berth, he taking the upper. "Those things will happen in France," says our friend, a laconic fellow anyway.

HORACE SUTTON.

Horace Sutton, former travel editor for the New York Post, *is now a free-lance writer and photographer. He contributes to various periodicals, including* The New York Times, *and will edit* SRL's *new biweekly "Booked for Travel" department.*

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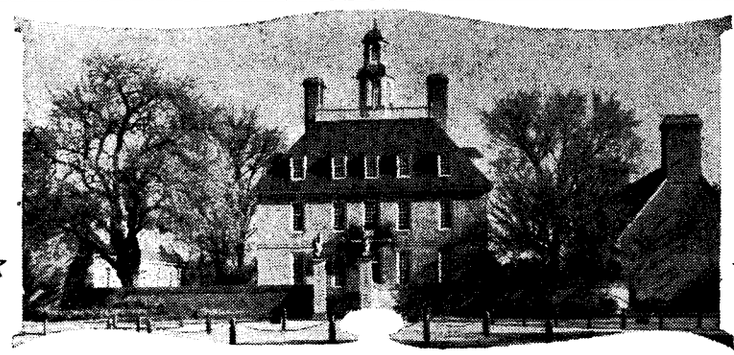

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LITERARY FIESTA IN MEXICO

(*Continued from page* 11)

The fair display of the great book firm of Robredo was well attended at all times. Other individual bookshop displays varied as to contents, beauty, and versatility. The larger shops had ample room actually to set up small models of commercial bookshops with shelves on three walls and numerous counter displays. There were always from two to six clerks hitting away at the cash registers in the larger booths as visitors became customers and went away carrying their purchases to infect others with the joy of ownership. Few of the books sold were wrapped, so it was easy to take a poll. It was not unusual to see a couple strolling through the fair each carrying from two to five paper books.

THE entertainment schedule was well arranged to interest the greatest number of people. In the large theatre inside the fair grounds programs were in progress from five in the afternoon until eleven each night. Crowds filled every available seat and stood outside the two large doors. Programs of music and lectures were broadcast all over the area. Each state represented at the fair had a special day during which its dignitaries were photographed, interviewed over the radio, and presented to the theatre audiences. On Vera Cruz day an entire symphony orchestra gave a great classical concert in three parts. Other states brought dancers, dramatic features, musicians, and story-tellers. There were ten special days including one for France and one for Spain, with the ambassadors in attendance.

The beautiful French exhibit at the fair had as its façade a large pictorial map of France in bright blue. The magnificent color work in the art books from Paris, the fine photographic studies of French cathedrals and chateaux, the scores of books by contemporary authors were displayed in two rooms. The exhibit was put on by the Librairie Française of the Paseo de la Reforma under the direction of the French attaché in charge of cultural affairs.

The Spanish exhibit was set up in a delightful provincial house with plaster walls and a corner fireplace. Three large oil paintings in the style of Velasquez covered the walls and contributed the proper atmosphere for enjoying a handsome copy of "Don Quixote," a bust of Cervantes in a wall niche, and a fine charcoal sketch of Lorca.

The exhibits from the various states of Mexico were extremely successful and seemed to an old county and state fair-goer more alive and real than our usual displays of giant ears of corn, pumpkins off the vine, and hand-quilted coverlets. The host of each of the state booths turned out to be a pleasant and often important citizen of the state doing a bit of state chest-beating for the duration of the fair.

Above the grassy entrance to the Vera Cruz exhibit hung effective blowups of their outstanding authors. An illustrated census for the state showed graphically the progress made in education, roadbuilding, and publishing for the last ten years. A mural map emphasized its natural resources, engineering feats, and cities of interest.

PUEBLO had a stunning woodcarving of a female figure at the entrance. Examples of flowers, embroidery, and weaving were placed dramatically in the background.

Querétaro had planted cacti in front of its booth on which had been painted typical designs. The display of current and rare literature was beautifully arranged.

Sinaoloa had a small but complete exhibition emphasizing in photographs, drawings, and amazing caricatures the contemporary writing of the state. Rare old books and priceless manuscripts under glass, pictures of the state's heroes, and photostats of the state's newspapers mounted on the walls completed the exhibit. Sinaoloa is a region of great fertility and produces agricultural riches which in turn support a robust interest in things cultural.

The extension department for culture in the State of Campeche sponsored a booth in which people spoke both Spanish and Mayan. Campeche's problems in teaching the people to read and write are more complex than those of most states. Prominently arranged in the Campeche booth were

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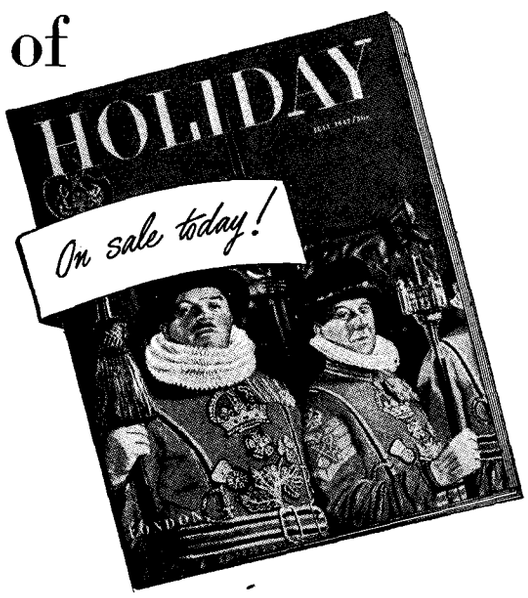
a great number of copies of a new book, "Belice," about the Alsace-Lorraine of the Western Hemisphere, which is Mexican in feeling and heritage, but part of British Honduras.

Sooner or later everyone comes to Mexico City, and this spring scores of Americans and Britishers enjoyed the Book Fair. Samuel Shellabarger only recently left Mexico after going to Morelia to see them shooting the picture from his novel "The Captain from Castile." Marc Brandel, author of "Rain Before Seven" and a new novel of distinction, "The Rod and the Staff," lives in Mexico City and likes it so well he may become a fixture there. Gerald Kersh, the successful English novelist, author of "Night and the City" and "The Weak and the Strong," has been in and out of Mexico City for some time and is frequently seen in the American Bookstore. Miguel Covarrubias, whose "Mexico South" is selling tremendously well in the United States and in Mexico, and his wife Rose, are at present in Tizapan. Betsy Putnam, Washington, late of the late UNRRA, is in Mexico City to finish a novel and visit her friends, Virginia Lee and Milton Bracker. Milton is the head of *The New York Times* bureau in Mexico City, and Virginia, who writes under the name Virginia Lee Warren, is just back from President Alemán's triumphal tour.

One of the real institutions in the book world of Mexico City is the American Bookstore at number 25 Avenida Madero. Robert Hill is the manager of the store which for many years was run by his father, Byron C. Hill. The store, which for over forty years has been a landmark for Americans in Mexico, is doing a thorough job of stocking and selling American books. The Mexican department of the store is Robert Hill's special concern. His checklist of standard titles consists of 112 books on Mexico, which are kept in stock at all times. The store has published its own edition (from the Rutledge plates) of "Discovery and Conquest of Mexico" by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, and sells an edition in paper and one in leather.

The book market of Mexico was one topic I discussed with everyone I met. It appears that until 1942, it was a matter of approximately one-half million dollars a year. For the last five years the total has been closer to three and one-half million each year. The tremendous increase is due to the success of the great educational movement throughout Mexico. Since 1922 there have been over 25,000 rural schools established, and the graduates of these new schools, now able to read and write, are part of the new and

Britain's brightest literary lights focus on LONDON! in the July issue of



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  The puckish creator of the world-famed "Colonel Blimp" lampoons the newspaper tycoons of London's Fleet Street.
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important book market of Mexico. The increased book market is also a definite result of Mexico's own revolutions. World War II had almost no influence on either Mexican publishing or Mexican bookselling. Very few of the best-selling war books of the United States were even translated into Spanish. "Berlin Diary," "One World," "Mission to Moscow" were among the most successful. There is really nothing in the Latin American market to compare with the best sellers of the United States. If a book has a wide success it means that 10,000 to 12,500 copies are sold in all of Latin America. "Forever Amber" sold about 30,000 copies there compared to the number in the United States.

Mexican and Latin American book publishers like to measure the market not merely by the number of copies sold but by the quality of the books published. They are proud of moderate quantities of many good titles.

"A best seller like 'Forever Amber' is to an American publisher what holding the winning lottery ticket would be to a Mexican publisher," said a scholarly Mexican editor, not remotely envious of the quantity sales rolled up by American best sellers.

Elizabeth Ann McMurray is one of the leading booksellers of Dallas, Tex.

Irresolute Introvert

THE RIMLESS WHEEL. By Roger Eddy. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1947. 336 pp. $3.

Reviewed by SARA HENDERSON HAY

ROGER EDDY's first book is a work of considerable distinction. It is the study of a complex and introverted adolescent, a boy whose very aimlessness is a deliberate defense against reality. Written in the first person, it portrays the life and character of Eben Osborne from his sixth to his twentieth year. Eben comes to live with his grandmother in a small New England town. It is a strange household untouched by the outside world, each member of which is unable to establish any real intimacy with the others. The grandmother lives in her memories of the past, and though she hopes that Eben will grow up to reclaim the importance and prestige of the family in the community where it was once a power she is unable to understand him or to make him understand her inarticulate affection and ambition for him.

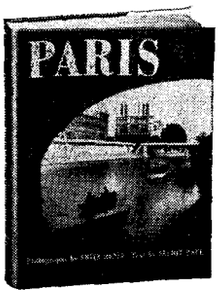
The book is a survey of Eben's childhood and adolescence, a memoir written by himself from a point of time in his eventual maturity, though the actual story leaves him at the age of twenty with only the implication that he will find a solution and a focus for his life. In the long retrospect, Eben, the narrator, reviews his confusion and aimlessness, the reticence and self-sufficiency which are only a retreat from actual and honest relationships. The boy's association with the family of Lem Dodds, who bought the sawmill from which Eben's grandfather made his fortune, plays an important part in his youth, but Eben rejects Lem's kindly interest in him, and though he drifts into an emotional attachment for Lem's daughter Alice he drifts out again, neither understanding nor accepting the obligations of friendship or affection.

When the Fitzhughs and their daughter Rusty come to Colebrook River Valley in Eben's sixteenth year he is shaken out of his shadowy never-never-land and for the first time in his life comes up against a situation and a conflict which he cannot negate by simple withdrawal into himself. His passion for Rusty is the first powerful emotion he has felt, but even this is not enough to prod him out of his lassitude. His grandmother dies and he lives on in the old house, letting it go deeper into disrepair. It is only when, after four summers of a baffling and irresolute relationship, Rusty confronts him with a few hard facts about himself that Eben finally awakens to some stirrings of purpose and a need for action.

> I think you are a disease that I've had that I'm over with now [she tells him]. You need more repairs than all your walls and your doors . . . there is no more shape to you than that fog down in the valley, and some day you'll dissolve, too . . . you never tell me what you're going to do because you don't know yourself . . . you have no shape at all. You're just a shadow. . . .

As a novel, "The Rimless Wheel" has somewhat the indirection and irresolution of its hero. Its distinction and its charm lie in the leisure and grace of its style, the accuracy and detail of the author's observation, the candor and the perception with which he explores the personality of Eben Osborne. There is exhibited here a fresh and original talent, a quality of writing which is both strong and sensitive. Mr. Eddy is a young writer of undeniable ability, and his first book is an accomplishment of considerable stature. It received one of the Macmillan Centenary Awards in a contest for the armed services.

Better Than Baedeker



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PARIS
PHOTOGRAPHY by FRITZ HENLE
TEXT by ELLIOT PAUL

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SUMMER READING

(*Continued from page 12*)

author's deep concern that women exert their influence for peace but its interest for the general reader derives from its warm and pleasant portrayal of an American family abroad.

* *

Readers of *The New Yorker* will be familiar with Richard Rovere's profile of that precious pair "Howe and Hummel" (Farrar & Straus), as amazing a couple of clever scoundrels as ever pleaded the case of other miscreants in court. These two criminal lawyers who were counsel to some of New York's most notorious criminals and wrongdoers furnish some of the liveliest copy which has made a book good reading in many a long day.

* *

There could be no volume which affords a pleasanter contrast to the foregoing as a picture of American life than John T. Winterich's "Another Day, Another Dollar" (Lippincott), reminiscences of an American boyhood and youth spent for the most part in Providence, R. I. Mr. Winterich writes with most engaging charm of simple events and a simple manner of living, and makes of his book a genuine and delightful bit of Americana.

* *

The title of Ludwig Bemelman's new tale evokes an unlovely image until it becomes apparent that "Dirty Eddie" (Viking) is a pig. This is a story of Hollywood in which the author seasons entertainment with satire.

* *

Good news for the lovers of Joseph Shearing's tales. There's a new novel, "The Three Widows" (Harpers), by this always effective writer whose stories of crime are generally drawn from actual episodes.

* *

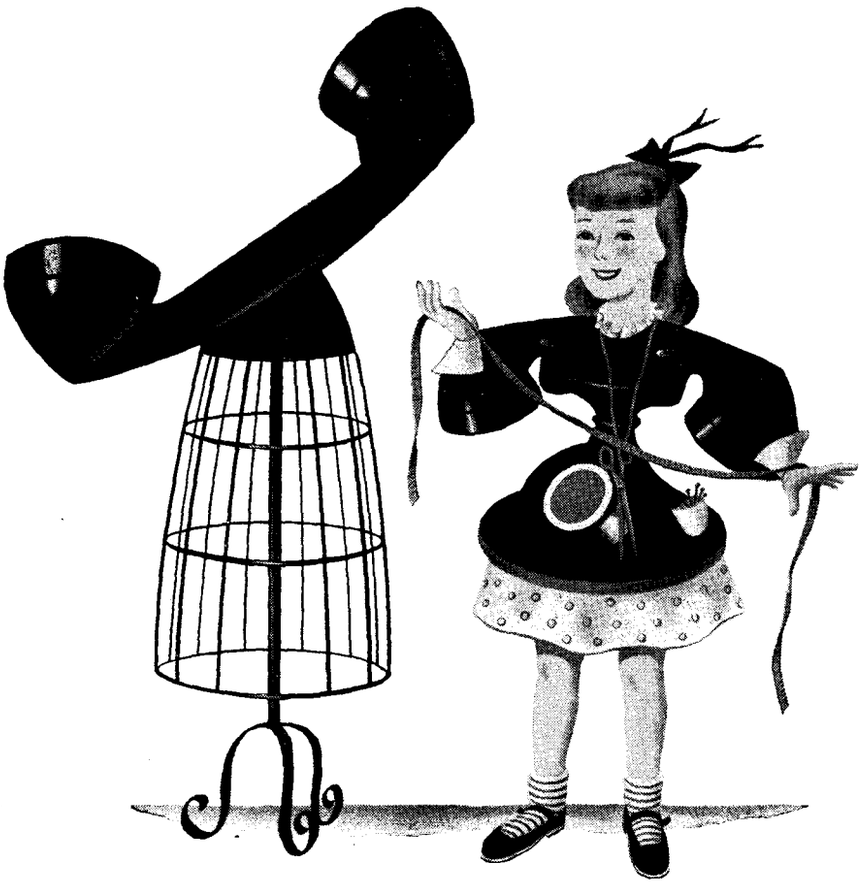
The progeny of "Life with Father" still continues to increase. The latest volume in this genre is William Manners's "Father and the Angels" (Dutton), a picture of family life.

* *

Offhand you probably don't know what "Wetback" (Coward-McCann), the title of a novel by Claude Garner, means. It's the term applied to a Mexican who makes an illegal entry into the United States by swimming or wading the Rio Grande. The story which Mr. Garner has woven about people of this kind is simple and charming.

September

Louise Townsend Nicholl, whose poetry has both grace of form and



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by Jeter A. Isely

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sympathetic insight, has a new volume of verse entitled "Life Is the Flesh" (Dutton).

* *

Robert Benchley's devout following will welcome a new selection from his writing in "Benchley--Or Else!" (Harpers).

* *

Life in the Eighties and Nineties in a small town at the mouth of the Columbia River is depicted with effectiveness and verve in Archie Binns's "Yon Rolling River" (Scribners).

* *

Not only those whose interest was specifically in the problems and exploits of the Navy during the war but all those (which means everybody) whose heart and thoughts followed someone serving on the seas will find absorbing matter in Admiral William F. Halsey's "An Admiral's Report" (Whittlesey).

* *

Martin Abzug's "Seventh Avenue Story" (Dial) has to do with the cloak-and-suit trade and some out of those throngs of workers who crowd the streets of the clothing region of New York during the lunch hour.

* *

"Best Detective Stories of the Year" (Dutton) edited by David C. Cook, promises entertaining hot weather reading.

* *

Anyone who is interested at all in the technique of writing will be fascinated by "The Journals of André Gide" (Knopf) in which that noted French novelist sets down as he moves through the years from 1889 to 1913 his impressions of the writings of others and his own problems and struggles. His book altogether is an engrossing chronicle, the highly personal and revelatory and quite informal dicta of a man who emerges from his journals a figure of real stature. It has been admirably translated by Justin O'Brien.

* *

John J. Espey, who will be remembered for his delightful "Minor Heresies," has another volume of sprightly and pungent essays and sketches, "Tales Out of School" (Knopf).

* *

Mr. and Mrs. North, beloved of mystery story addicts, saunter in their usual engaging fashion through the pages of a new detective story by Frances and Richard Lockridge. The tale is entitled "Unseen Harbor" (Lippincott).

* *

There must be thousands who read the stories of the late Thomas Beer as they appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* who will extend an eager welcome to his "Collected Stories" (Knopf).

* *

Time marches on so rapidly and memory is so treacherous a thing that even those whose minds tenaciously hold facts will in all probability have many a moment of startled realization of how much recent history they have forgotten when, leafing through "I Remember Distinctly" (Harpers) in which the pictures assembled by Agnes Rogers Allen are acompanied by a running commentary by her husband Frederick Lewis Allen, they come upon faces, incidents, and fashions familiar only yesterday. The book is a fascinating compendium which presents a panoramic survey of American events and manners during the "years of peace," the period between the two world wars.

* *

In "The World of Freedom" (Random House) Jacob Axelrad writes of Patrick Henry and his times, an era which like our own took up the challenge of liberty or death.

* *

Though it covers a period of twenty-five years, Sheila Kaye-Smith's "The Lardners and the Laurelwoods" (Harpers) does not move straight forward in time but shifts back and forth. It is a story of the interwoven lives of a family of the small gentry and of one of self-respecting and educated farmers.

Publication Date Uncertain

"Gus the Great," by Thomas W. Duncan (Lippincott).

"End of a Berlin Diary," by William Shirer (Knopf).

"Strange Life of Ivan Osokin," by P. D. Ouspensky (Studio).

"Paris Herald," by Al Laney (Appleton-Century).

"The Sealed Verdict," by Lionel Shapiro (Doubleday).

"The Ring and the Cross," by Robert Rylee (Knopf).

"The Dark Device," by Hannah Lees (Harpers).

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Men and women, their folly, their suffering, their aspiration, the God in them, are the material of our art, and an artist must submit to them as he submits to all else. He is not in the world to crucify humanity, but to wash its feet.

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Last Voyage

HELIX. By David Loughlin. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 242 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by J. R. H. COUSE

A STORY-LINE can seldom be thought of in terms of visual design. But this tale of a modern ship and the men who drive her is trimly described in its title. The story goes in a true spiral, like a rope in fancy coil.

It is mainly about three engineers: the chief, Al Seligman, an old-timer whose technology isn't adequate to the complex needs of his newly assigned berth; his first assistant, young Ed Greenwater, experienced and knowing in the ways of the S/S *Cape Harting's* turbines; and the second assistant, Paul Jessup, really an amateur sailor, a shipping company clerk of college education, gone to sea for the sailings.

The tale is a simple but compelling one about a ship's last voyage. Out of New York bound for West Africa, the three engineers nurse her complicated machinery as high-pressure jobs always have to be coddled. And by the time they reach Africa, they labor among more dynamics than the mechanical ones. Because by then it's apparent that only young Greenwater can solve their recurring problems in keeping her propeller turning. And that makes the chief feel like a hammer-mechanic, driving him into the solaces of his bunk and his bottle, while Jessup despises himself for having to steer between the chief's shame and the first assistant's righteousness. And when Greenwater takes advantage of his own illness in refusing to save the chief from humiliation in his job, it's Jessup who takes charge of the engineroom, guided by no better skill than recollection of Greenwater's habits. When disaster is imminent from forces outside the ship, Jessup refuses to dwindle back into pitiful size; and he achieves a truly tragic stature in remaining at his post as the ship is sunk. It is a melodrama of proven happening, the evil coming in out of the sea to destroy Jessup just as it may unexpectedly smash any other small, bright world and all its marvelous machinery.

The story is well composed in all those parts. It is only as fulsome in its excellent mechanical expositions as its characters make necessary, a proportion between actors and scene of action that can be mechanically described as a turbine-job in emotional power. Of them all, it is Jessup who most truly follows the spiral of the tale, with his superior officers showing irregular wakes as they diverge and converge upon his course; which makes it more exact to describe the story as the convolution of Jessup's ego.

This first novel can be approved as fine engineering, in and on the main.

Navy RHIP

OFF MY SEA CHEST. By Lewis H. Conarroe. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1947. 283 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by ROBERT A. LOW

NAVY Brass isn't going to enjoy "Off My Sea Chest."

Lewis H. Conarroe came out of the Navy a Lieutenant Commander, USNR, after some four years of service. Now he has written his version of the inefficiency, red-tape, injustice, and confusion that went into the Navy's prosecution of World War II. "Off My Sea Chest" is a compilation of episodes and characterizations, sharply satirizing the Navy of square pegs and round holes, where, according to the author, merit and initiative had little or no bearing on rank or responsibility.

Here are a few of the author's Academy types who find their way in and around and up the ladder of success within our Naval service:

Bandyshanks, the cruiser exec ("on the back row when God gave out legs,") who believed that inspiring hatred was the quickest means to a fourth stripe.

Captain Composite, the skipper of the *Potomac Prowler,* an old battleship converted for use as a gunnery training establishment, who played the "numbers game" with the utmost skill and dexterity.

Lieutenant Priggish, whose four years in the "Prig Factory" on the Severn (the U. S. Naval Academy) have taught him that in the Navy "it's a matter of dog eat dog."

Mr. Conarroe explains the meaning of RHIP (Rank Has Its Privileges) and contends there are few privileges that rank does not take. For example there are these phenomena of the Navy's global war:

Staff officers who maintain their flags on sea-going ships which never go to sea to earn the ten per cent additional pay given for sea duty; admirals who throw sizzling parties at taxpayers' expense; and the countless officers, both reserve and regular, who made Government station wagons and jeeps their personal property.

I feel a hot flush of shame [Mr. Conarroe writes] every time I con-

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sider the blatant inequalities of privilege, favoritism, and injustice which separated the officer caste from what Annapolis considers common sailors.

After three years with the fleet . . . I came to the conclusion that we fought for democracy under the most arbitrarily mis-run system an enlightened people could possibly have produced.

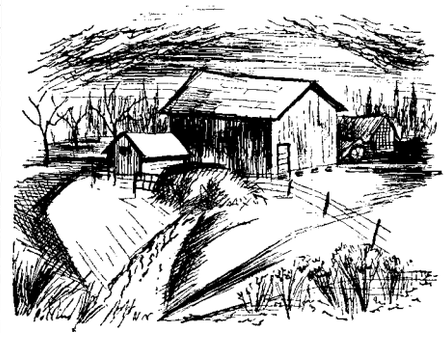
The author suggests that if discipline is to mean anything, it must be based on mutual respect between officer and enlisted man. Among regular Naval officers he found a kind of "lordly tolerance" toward their men. For this attitude, Mr. Conarroe has one answer: two years in the enlisted ranks as a prerequisite for every Annapolis appointment.

The author has been a reporter and advertising copy writer. He knows how to write boldly and colorfully, and in this book sprite Naval jargon adds salt to his already peppery style.

This book lends comparison to Thomas Heggen's widely acclaimed "Mr. Roberts." From the point of telling an amusing story, "Off My Sea Chest" holds its own. But Mr. Heggen was content to tell his story and leave the moral interpretation to the reader. Mr. Conarroe, on the other hand, overstates his case, editorializing on situations which speak very well for themselves. Mr. Conarroe's case against the Navy might have been more effective had he followed Mr. Heggen's example.

The author has plenty to get off his sea chest. And despite his vitriolic outbursts, he has written a highly readable, often hilarious first book.

Epigrams and Music



ROOMS IN A HOUSE and Other Poems 1931-1944. *By Nathaniel Burt. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.* 1947. 119 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by ROBERT HILLYER

MR. BURT is both musician and poet, an excellent combination. When he is at his simplest and most melodic, his lyrics are beautiful. "Dews of Youth," "Suggestion," "Bird in Hand," and "Latitude Zero" are memorably fine. He can be charming and fantastic, as in "Old Mattie," "Boardwalk," "Mr. Simpkins," and "Mischief," without lapsing into embarrassing whimsicality. Sometimes he turns a well-wrought epigram. In the sonnet, both Shakesperian and Petrarchan, he is fluent and effective. When we add that such a poem as "Tower of Roland" has the magic of incantation, we have accorded him an almost Draytonian variety.

Throughout the book we observe an unobtrusive kinship with other poets, notably the Elizabethans, Donne, Housman, De la Mare, the Imagists, and (especially in the "Sea Piece") James Stephens.

Mr. Burt has not, however, been sufficiently stern in sorting out his poems. "Europa," a brief deviation into French, is very shaky. "Aloha.. Aloha..Aloha.." merely adds its bit of proof that anatomy is nearly always melancholy. "Romantic Movement" should have been scored, not versified. "Rooms in the House" could not, I suppose, be omitted, for it is the most ambitious piece in the book, and the author has thought well enough of it to make it the title poem. But it is not good. Here he is consciously the musician; the work has too much machinery. The mood and general method are right out of the earlier Aiken, perhaps of "Nocturne of Remembered Spring." Dreams drift by, crepuscular and cloudy, broken by stabs of realism or Elizabethan echoes broken for ironic effect. There is some "Waste Land" in it, and, with a bow to the decade, a few surrealistic incongruities. There are, too, lovely impressions and passages scattered throughout the composition, because Mr. Burt cannot escape being a good poet; but, on the whole, it is a self-indulgent performance.

In the lyrics, where Mr. Burt is at his best, we walk with him in poet's weather, keenly aware, through the passing moment, of the longer seasons, life with its music and death with its silence. There are fragments with overtones of completed experience. "Round for Four Voices" and "Shore Leave" are two more selections I cannot pass by without mention, two out of many which I shall remember. Such poems are enchanting. There are enough of them to earn for this new poet a large and welcoming audience.

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(Continued from page 10)

these mannerisms with a quiet smile, with an implied "Of course I know the risks I am taking, the effects I am creating—do you take me for a fool?"

It is personality that animates Max's work, but form and finish that will go far toward preserving it. The essays are not simply serpentine excursions in personality; they are real essays, often perfect essays, that explore a subject without seeming to exhaust it, that move suavely and wittily from point to point, till they reach a sound resting place and stop. They breathe culture, but never down your neck; they are as light, but certainly not as colorless, as air; they are as beckoning and satisfying as his own Golden Drugget. One sometimes wonders just why Sir Max's best essays so completely transcend everyone else's in our time, and one seems to find the answer in their tone. Somehow the most noticeably precious of our writers is also the most genially conversational; he chats with us as Chesterton never did, as Shaw—for all his greatness—never could. He shows the reader every courtesy, but his greatest concern is for the essay form itself—which shall remain an essay and never become a dissertation, an impromptu, or even an out-and-out memoir.

To achieve that tone a writer must definitely possess a temperament. A mind, no matter how bright or agile, is not enough; not even if a sense of fun and a sense of humor go with it. We are back again, no doubt, in the realm of personality, but with some differences; for personality is not temperament, as many writers who had the one without the other—Milton, say, or Macaulay—will prove. It was well for Max to come of age in the Nineties, for with all its faults and extravagances that was the last period in which temperament was highly prized or could wholly prosper. It was the last time that a man could play his own tune in his own house, and not against the chords, and frequently the clangor, of the outside world. It was the last time that the eighteenth century—which for all its sense of form reveled in attractive eccentricity—had any decisive influence. Behind Max stands, quite plainly, Yorick. Since the Nineties certain writers have had "sensibility"—a word suggesting the frustration of temperament rather more than the fulfillment—and certain others have had "manner"; but temperament in the purest, most unobstructed sense they have for the most part lacked.

It took Max a long time to master his tune; for all his finest essays are to be found in "And Even Now" (1920). Here is "No. 2 the Pines," that glowing memoir of Swinburne which is saved by its impish touches and sly sidelights from being too reverent. Here is that perfect trifle, "A Clergyman." Here, again, is "Hosts and Guests," the model and despair of anyone who would write an essay that is exactly, supremely, an essay. Here, indeed, with very few exceptions, is one good thing after another. Yet, before turning away from Max's essays, one ought to note how in all periods they exhibit —though in late periods most keenly—his wit. That wit was pretty enough in the Nineties, when Max could remark that "theatrical reminiscence is the most awful weapon in the armory of old age. I am sure that much of the respect which we pay to an elderly man is due to our suspicion that he could avenge any slight by describing the late Charles Matthews in 'Cool As a Cucumber'." But later Max's wit became deeply

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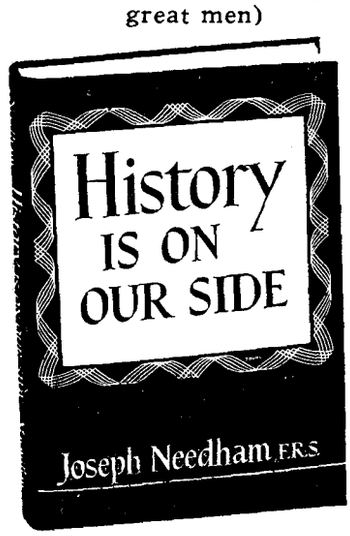

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW

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wedded to his style, as in the inimitable last sentence of "Hosts and Guests."

Sir Max's only novel is not a great favorite of mine. "Zuleika Dobson" contains delightful things, and excellent judges of literature—E. M. Forster for one—have praised it highly. But for me "Zuleika" is unsteadily poised between fantasy and satire, when indeed it is anything more than a classicist's picnic or an Oxford family joke. As to form, perhaps it might better have been a long novelette: stretched into a novel it has to be elaborate to avoid seeming thin, and it doesn't avoid seeming thin. As to content, the story it tells does not altogether come off. Possibly I lack the delicate imagination that is needed to enter with a whole heart into Sir Max's conspiracy. But possibly the author himself lacked the robust imagination that is needed to make something of this kind really succeed. In satiric fantasy the author must somehow, with a bold manœuver, steal (rather than woo) the reader's credulity; and however great Sir Max's finesse, it is not finesse—and certainly not archness—that a story like "Zuleika" most needs; it is high spirits, lively turns, audacity. And that is just what it frequently lacks. I can't help thinking that the only character in the book whom Sir Max wrote about with real wickedness of understanding was the Duke of Dorset. And the chill, haughty, impervious Duke, though a delightful character for a book that might then have been called "Eight Men," is not at all the best character for a book needing gusto and energy. (It could be part of the joke that "Zuleika" lacks these things precisely because Oxford lacks them; but if so, that is carrying the joke, artistically, rather far.) The Duke is a superb subject for satiric portraiture, but a doubtful hero for an extravagant plot.

AND for all its skill, there is also a slight crudeness about "Zuleika" and a slight unpalatability. Max, by failing to dissolve the real in the fantastic, cannot make the drownings, when they come, quite matters of disembodied comedy. And this is as good a place as any (since in "Zuleika" we meet the Rhodes scholar Abimelech V. Oover) to touch upon Max's treatment of America and Americans. His aversion, real or assumed, for America would trouble me very little if it did not so consistently coarsen his touch. Certainly nothing lends itself more to burlesque than a certain type of Rhodes scholar. But Abimelech is a burlesque of a burlesque—or rather a parody of a parody, since it is his lingo that chiefly matters. How the greatest parodist alive could have gone so startlingly wrong with the American language is not easily explained.

For Sir Max is by all odds the greatest parodist, as he is the greatest essayist, of our time; and the best things in "A Christmas Garland" are almost beyond praise. The parody of Henry James, for example, is not only a wonderful take-off of the style ("the scarred, the poor dear woebegone and so very beguilingly *not* refractory mirror of the moment"); but the subject-matter—two tots worriedly debating whether they should inspect their Christmas stockings—is, as a travesty of a Jamesian predicament, little short of inspired. And the take-off of George Moore contains perhaps the finest single touch in all parody, when the all-too-Gallic and posturing Moore, seized with "strange thoughts that I cannot express in English," turns Pater's description of the Mona Lisa into French. To be quite perfect, there should be one or two mistakes in the French; though possibly there are.

If one persists in asking oneself why Max's treatment of Abimelech falls so flat, the answer may well lie in the less effective of the "Christmas Garland" pieces. All Max's finest parodies are at the expense of writers he loves or appreciates: "One can't really understand what one doesn't love, and one can't make good fun without real understanding," Maltby tells Max in "Seven Men," though it might better be Max telling Maltby. The parodies of Wells, say, or Kipling, are extremely clever; but they fall short of the piece on Gosse or James because they are conceived in antipathy. Max bludgeons Wells, but somehow Wells escapes only bruised; but he kills James, in the sense that each man kills the thing he loves.

If Max partly failed with his one novel, he brilliantly succeeded with that other work of fiction, "Seven Men." These stories make up a book almost as original as it is captivating. In "Enoch Soames" and "Maltby and Braxton" Max has spoofed the literary temperament of the Nineties, and of more than the Nineties—its affectations and insane vanities, its snobbery and emulousness—with superb skill. In these tales Max found his perfect material, reviving with precision and nostalgia a real world of real people, and then, through fantasy, standing it squarely on its head. "Enoch Soames" is a fine yarn into the bargain. I feel sure that on June 3, 1997, there will be many Maxists posted, in a high state of tension, about the Reading Room of the British Museum; I shall be ninety-two, but I hope to be there myself. And in "Savonarola Brown"

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Max has woven Shakespeare and seventh-rateness into imperishable nonsense.

Sir Max's theatre criticism doubtless suffers from the fact that its author was never deeply drawn to the theatre, or powerfully held by it. No one could have been less stage-struck than that reviewer, who confessed he was bored by the play he saw on his tenth birthday. But his critical approach has, besides a certain personal charm, a certain solid usefulness. By not surrendering easily to the theatre's "glamor," Max was saved from swallowing a lot of its silliness. He saw the stage for what it was and largely still is: the least impressive, the least adult of contemporary arts. He never, like Shaw, attacked it frontally; he just slowly undermined its pretensions by quietly underlining its stupidities. I suspect that, in the perspective of half a century, we got a sounder estimate of the English theatre of his time from Max than we do from his more knowledgeable and responsive colleagues Walkley and Archer. To be sure, Max's temperament led him into errors and inadequacies. He underrated Gorki, for example, and overrated Maeterlinck. There is again no gusto in his criticism; but there is much unprofessional shrewdness, there is fairly much professional observation, there is mild wit and—mixed blessing—an essayist's emphasis on form. Max was not an outstandingly good critic; nor, like Shaw, so superb a journalist and electrical a personality that he himself still holds up where his subject-matter doesn't; but he wrote the sort of antiseptic criticism that, by not succumbing to the moment's emotionalism, has more than the moment's value.

As to Sir Max's general "place" in literature, one can more easily dispute how high it is than how permanent. Of all the writers of their time, it is men like Max and A. E. Housman—men who in their minor way frequently achieved perfection—that we can feel surest will be read with pleasure for many generations to come. They cared more for art than for life, for art, moreover, that has shapeliness rather than size; and the preference greatly limits them in stature. But it should also preserve them in time, in the sense that enamel outwears flesh. In terms of posterity, perfection is much less of a gamble than greatness. How big Max's audience will be a generation, or a century, hence is indeed something else again. Max was always caviare; probably he always will be. But a dozen of his essays and two or three of his stories should survive as long as there is a civilized point of view.

Louis Kronenberger, dramatic critic of Time *and* PM, *recently edited "The Pleasure of Their Company."*

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

SOME FICTIONAL SWIMMERS

The art of swimming played an important part in the stories briefly described below. Can you name the stories and their authors? You'll find the answers on page 48.

1. Bored by inactivity, a sailor undertakes a long six- or seven-mile swim to a distant island, winds up forty miles and two days later after a tense fight for life.
2. A little girl swims in a pool of tears which she had wept a short time previously.
3. A swimmer loses his life in trying to rescue from a wrecked ship the man who had betrayed his fiancee.
4. Sewed up in a sack with a thirty-six-pound weight tied to his feet, this man is tossed into the Mediterranean but cuts himself loose and swims for an hour through a stormy sea.
5. The queen of the water fairies transforms a chimney sweep into a small fish, who swims all the way to the Other-end-of-Nowhere.
6. A soldier leaps from a ruined bridge into a swollen river and, clad in full armor, swims safely to shore.
7. Every night a young man swims the Hellespont to visit his lady love.
8. "He stay'd not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone, he swam the Eske river where ford there was none."
9. When a little girl falls off a steamboat, a Negro slave jumps overboard and keeps her afloat until the steamboat backs up and rescues them.
10. When his raft is run down by a Mississippi steamboat, a boy swims two miles to shore.

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In Alien Soil

THE GROWING ROOTS. By Cornelia Jessey. New York: Crown Publishers. 1947. 324 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

THE first half of this book offers a consummate re-creation of the life and times of a Jewish immigrant family in America. There have been a hundred such tales, certainly, but I cannot remember any recent novel that captures as accurately the exact flavor of the eager, fearful, voluble Jew on a foreign shore; just the right, salty, inverted phrase (carefully done with its truth intact, not the gross distortion that passes for humor), just the right on-edge emotionalism, the clannishness and the expansive humanitarianism, the rigid doctrines fraying immediately at the edges under the wash of the alien culture. And I am particularly glad to have this fictional family of Gruenebaums spreading westward across the country, from New York outward to Colorado. The Jew as East-Side tenement-dweller has been sufficiently studied; the Jew as Western pioneer is a less familiar figure in literature. We need to be reminded that he exists. Myron Brinig wrote a brilliant sequence of novels on this theme, and "The Growing Roots," for half its length anyway, is as good as these—which is meant to be high praise.

What I miss in the latter part of the book is a continuing sense of intimate reality. The warmth of life recedes, and ideas take the stage. The family grows up, the young ones become men and women, marry and have children, and face another set of problems than those of the early Gruenebaums. The problem of anti-semitism, for example, (which the first comers were too enormously busy, and too joyful over their new world, to notice); and the problem of Zionism. Should the Jew depart to build a homeland, or should he remain to help build a tolerable home wherever he is? The questions are faced with varying degrees of intellect and fortitude by the younger

generation, and discussed at greater and greater length, with a corresponding loss of convincing dramatic action. There is a sense of contrivance here, of characters and incidents devised to provide a fictionized debate on the issues of Palestine. The arguments are cogent, they are strongly made on either side, they seem to present a thorough canvass of opinion. But we should exchange them willingly for a study of the younger Gruenebaums as thoroughly satisfying as that of their begetters in the first hundred and fifty pages.

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Dark Schemes

THE WEB OF DAYS. By Edna Lee. New York: D. Appleton-Century Co. 1947. 276 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by
NANCY GROBERG CHAIKIN

AS we read Mrs. Lee's story of a hired governess on a post-Civil War plantation, we are reminded of a hundred things we have read before. Echoes of "Jane Eyre" and of "Rebecca" sound, with other echoes, in our ears. But alas, the book has not the depth of the former, nor the mystery of the latter, and is, after all, just a conglomeration of very familiar phrases and people and plots.

There is Hester Snow—Yankee governess—who probes the mysteries of Seven Chimneys, builds up the long-neglected plantation, marries its cruel and self-indulgent owner, raises his son and bears another; and all the while that she is probing and building and raising and bearing, she is harboring a secret love for her husband's half-brother. Her husband, St. Clair LeGrand, has a black past (even blacker than Hester at first suspects), and as she uncovers his crimes and exposes herself to his nefarious will, we get to lean pretty much on his half-brother, Roi, who is, somehow, always to-the-rescue. Given these three, plus St. Clair's equally dangerous mother, and his lonely young son, it is not long before we have placed the story in a worn and familiar category to which it remains generally true.

Although the story takes place at a time of turmoil in the South—when the freed, bewildered Negroes, scheming politicians, and devastated plantations presented a profound problem in the history of our country—Mrs. Lee has reduced the examination of such conditions to a minimum, and the ambitions and prejudices of her heroine succeed in clouding pretty well the only significant issue in her story.

She has concentrated on melodrama—on dark schemes, wicked deeds, sudden rescues—and her characters, because they are so much what we would expect them to be, because we suspect their motives and their crimes before Hester does, cannot be taken very seriously. Mrs. Lee seems to feel that characterization consists in selecting an adjective or two for each character and persistently, inflexibly, applying it. Far from clarifying her people, such a method merely deadens them, until we can get no living picture at all.

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NEW EDITIONS

READERS who missed Flora Thompson's "Lark Rise," "Over to Candelford," and "Candleford Green," when these books were published individually, should repair their misfortune by possessing themselves as soon as possible of the one-volume edition of the trilogy, entitled "Lark Rise to Candleford" (Oxford University Press, $5), with an introduction by H. J. Massingham and admirable wood-engravings by Julie Neild. They should, that is, if they have any taste for quiet, leisurely, beautiful writing which evokes a way of life that can now be remembered only by those who are, at least, approaching old age; a way of life that sturdily resisted the industrial revolution, but which had to yield at last to the conquering machine.

Miss Thompson writes reminiscently of a childhood and adolescence spent in Oxfordshire during the Eighties and Nineties of the last century. She calls her young heroine Laura, but we have Mr. Massingham's assurance, and would be sure even without it, that Laura is but another name for Flora. Her father was a stone mason, her mother had been a children's nurse; the little girl grew up in the hamlet of Lark Rise, and left it before she was fifteen to become a postal assistant in the nearby village of Candleford Green. The trilogy's first volume is concerned wholly with the life of the hamlet, peopled by farm laborers and their families; the second, still based on Lark Rise, gives us glimpses of Candleford town and some of Laura's more opulent relations, including a builder and a shoemaker; the third pictures the village life of Candleford Green as seen from the central and respectable vantage point of the post office, where Laura served under the kindly Miss Lane, who combined Her Majesty's business with that of her own inherited smithy.

Miss Thompson makes hamlet and village live again; their inhabitants, their daily routines, their festivals. She writes of years when farm laborers were paid ten shillings a week; when a postmaster, earning two hundred and fifty pounds a year, was able "to keep his own pony carriage, a maid for his wife, and to entertain his friends and educate his children"; when clergymen regularly informed their flocks that God "had appointed a place for every man, woman, and child on this earth, and it was their bounden duty to remain contentedly in their niches." She writes of a society which, seemingly founded on rock, was already undermined; but, she insists, "in its old age it had some pleasant aspects and not everything about it was despicable." She insists, too, that there was more general happiness then than now. This is no mere sentimentality, I am sure. Desire is the source of most unhappiness, and the machine has manufactured desires on a scale never before known. If I have not dwelt on that quality of Miss Thompson's writing for which there is still no more accurate word than charm, it is in the hope that readers of this column will discover that charm for themselves.

The Oxford University Press's famous World's Classics series now has a younger but larger brother, a child of the New York branch. This is the World's Classics Galaxy Edition, the first volume of which houses one of the best-known works of our best-known nonagenarian: "Back to Methuselah," complete with revised preface and postscript, by Bernard Shaw ($1.50). The Galaxy page is just enough taller and wider than that of the regular World's Classics to permit a more generous use of legible type, and the book as a whole is a model of attractive simplicity. "Methuselah" is one of Shaw's more untidy dramas, but it is alive with ideas, as are its preface and postscript.

Not having read Jules Verne for many years, I had forgotten that his sense of humor equaled his imagination. At least, it does in his hilarious account of the activities of the Baltimore Gun Club, to be found in "From the Earth to the Moon" and its sequel "Round the Moon" (Didier, $3.) . . . Richard McKeon's "Introduction to Aristotle" (Modern Library, $1.25), which includes the Poetics, Ethics, Posterior Analytics, and *De Anima*, with selected books from three other treatises, plus the editor's general and particular introductions, is a compact, useful volume. . . . Mystery fans will find two fair items in Ngaio Marsh's "Death and the Dancing Footman" and John Dickson Carr's "The Lost Gallows" (Pocket Books, 25c each). The first is a fine mess of red herrings, the second a brave excursion into the improbable.

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KEEP THE COFFINS COMING *Julius Long* (Messner: $2.)	Anti-fascist bodyguard for race-hating "All American League" leader shoots boss and negotiates ten more homicides before slaughter ends.	Floggings, killings in cold blood, torture-shootings, tommy-gunnings, sappings, masochism—but it's all for democracy and a brave new world.	Jeepers!
NOT WITH MY NECK *Tom Van Dycke & Ben Kerner* (Messner: $2)	Pleasure-seeking sailor meets alluring gals in San Francisco night-club and becomes "convenient patsy" for murders which he angrily solves.	Likable, resourceful, and much put-upon "dancing mariner" carries lurid yarn pretty well—although practically everything happens in slam-bang finale.	Rugged
THEY CAN'T ALL BE GUILTY *M. V. Heberden* (Crime Club: $2.)	Desmond Shannon goes to red-riddled up-state New York town to save convicted youngster from chair and solve some other slayings.	Red-headed sleuth less rambunctious than in certain earlier adventures but action is fast enough and situations have ample kick.	Tough and timely
KILL ME AGAIN *John Bentley* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50)	Female loan-corp. head poisoned and stabbed in Long Island mansion. Glib family lawyer irritates cops and beats them to solution.	Daring author defies mystery-story *tabu*—and gets away with it, due to iridescent prattle and some interesting characters.	Exasperating
MISS WITHERS REGRETS *Stuart Palmer* (Crime Club: $2).	Swimming-pool slaying of rich Long Islander charged to wife's former sweetheart. Hildegarde Withers comes out of retirement to save him.	Hildegarde meddles as miraculously as ever—although recent inactivity has slightly subdued her. Plot good; action swift; finish logical—but regrettable.	Enjoyable
THE HOODED VULTURE MURDERS *Robert Poertner Koehler* (Phoenix: $2.)	Two private investigators motoring through Mexico to job in Guatemala find corpse in wrecked car and investigate numerous interested parties.	Mexican background interesting. People are colorless, though sleuths occasionally come to life. Story slow—and title very far fetched.	Routine
DON'T EVER LOVE ME *Octavus Roy Cohen* (Macmillan: $2.50)	New York advt.-agency head shot while taking girl copywriter home from opera. Lieut. Max Gold investigates killing and further fatalities.	Certain minor bobbles in agency mechanics may raise advt.-fraternity eyebrows . . otherwise story is slick, colorful, and ingeniously plotted.	O.K.
THE PREYING MANTIS *Nancy Rutledge* (Crime Club: $2)	Mysterious message from, and ensuing violent death of, young cousin excite interest of Midwestern engineer, and start train of homicidal happenings.	Ruthless millionaire's relentless search for symbol of power over sinister society sparks many shiversome scenes, most of them quite unbelievable.	Shocker
MURDER STALKS THE CIRCLE *Lee Thayer* (Dodd, Mead: $2.50)	Connecticut bookseller's death in fire resembles suicide. Peter Clancy, valet Wiggar, and assorted police dig successfully into malodorous family secrets.	Clancy's knowledge of type-faces and certain nineteenth-century forgeries unearths contemporary cheat and puts final finger on desperate killer.	Pleasant
THE LADY REGRETS *James M. Fox* (Coward-McCann: $2.50)	Ex-G2 Maj. and wife investigate their way out of suspicion in kidnapping of Cal. tycoon's daughter and slaying of son.	Couple of fearless and carefree amateurs, aided by extremely obliging cops and ferocious Great Dane, race through thrillingly unbelievable scenes.	Passable

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The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT
	Recording Technique	*Surface*	
STRAVINSKY, SONATA FOR TWO PIANOS (1944): CINQ PIECES FACILES (1916). Gold and Fizdale. Concert Hall Soc. A6. (2 *plastic*) *subscription only*	Excellent piano recording but not yet ideal; still too much hardness and percussion. But can it be much better?	AA (*plastic*)	(*See below*) The sonata a typical recent work, in classic tradition of sonata form (sonatina). The Five Pieces very French; whimsical, gay French folk song style.
BOWLES, SONATA FOR TWO PIANOS. Gold and Fizdale. Concert Hall Soc. A5 (2 10″ *plastic*) *subscription only.*	Seems more percussive than Stravinsky (above); due mostly to the music itself, not the engineering.	AA (*plastic*)	A serious, dissonant work, Bach-jazz style, from this eclectic American. Last mvt. goes African. Good assimilation here of jazz, blues.

THE BEETHOVEN TOUCH

WHAT can one do when, in the face of considered judgment, a mere handful of tones from an unimportant new work insists on revolving in one's brain until the need to go back and play them again is satisfied? What can one say when music that is supposed to come from a played-out master so obstinately intrudes itself on the consciousness? The little Stravinsky sonata (above) has been doing this to me. It may be significant, but I just can't get away from it.

Granted the big, early works of Stravinsky were vital to twentieth-century music; agreed that they are music of amazing power and originality. Granted even that the later Stravinsky (most of his work) may seem pale, small-scale, intellectual by comparison. Granted even that Stravinsky *is* played out, as our own Professor Lang has reasonably argued (*SRL*, May 3). And yet . . . the insistence of this little ten-minute trifle, the impact of the three small tones that are its foundation, brings the whole argument down in a heap. For these tones, outwardly not insistent, set up challenging relationships, as full of capabilities for development as the casual openings of many a work by Beethoven.

What the once-over listener misses in these recent works of Stravinsky—this and others more important—is the Beethoven touch. Each of them is the perfect if outwardly unemotional working out of a concrete premise of pure music: given such and such notes thrown together, here is the outcome. Dry, intellectual, perhaps; but this is at the very root of the classical concept of Western art music. Here, for example, in an F major setting, are the three successive tones B-flat, C, E, with an A emphasized in the bass. The entire first movement builds from the tantalizing dissonant-consonant relationships thus set up, ending, characteristically, on a chord composed of them all. There is among these tones the tense augmented fourth, unresolved, between B-flat and E and the conflicting affinity between E, C, and A. There is the peculiarly phrygian effect (common with Stravinsky) of the strong A in the tonality of F. Above all there is the persistence of E itself, pulled upon by conflicting forces. There is its strong melodic tendency upwards to F and away from the incompatible B-flat; and against that, its placid and static relation of pure consonance to C; E stands firm and dissonant too, as the harmonic major seventh to F, yet is ready to fall downward a fifth at the touch of an A, to which it is the dominant. Forces like these (and they are Beethoven's forces) are what give this insignificant little piece its obstinate power to cling to the mind. Similar forces—the three notes, B, C, G that open his C major symphony—make of each of these seemingly monotonous works of Stravinsky a musical world in itself.

Whether Stravinsky's later music is significant or not I do not know, nor particularly care, for that is a matter of comparison. Whether it lacks emotion and feeling, I cannot say. That it contains the highest kind of pure musical thought and logic I am perfectly sure.

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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the Phoenix Nest

WHAT AILS THE WHODUNIT?

MURDER no longer arouses
The chills and the thrills that
it used to;
Forms in mysterious houses
Droop as if readers refused to
Quake with vicarious terror.
They limp away mumbling, "My
error!"

Cyanide shaken from phials
Drips into coffee unheeded;
Death in anonymous vials
Urgently asks to be speeded.
Homicide seems to be zestless;
The reader, the reader is restless!

If the detective is done for,
Banned from the library tables,
If the old crime club now runs for
Dementia in sex and in sables,
Bury the sleuth at the dawning . . .
He probably passed away yawning.

ELIAS LIEBERMAN.

* * *

Recently I paid a visit to WNEW, New York City, because I had heard that the Bill of Rights had been set to music. At a time when the battle against racial intolerance seems to be swinging toward victory, to judge by public interest in a novel such as "Gentleman's Agreement," which has become a best-seller, in another novel, "Kingsblood Royal," which presents the case of the Negro in a new way, in the exposure by the National Institute of Arts and Letters of anti-Semitic propaganda carried to a ridiculous extreme—at a time like this it seemed to me especially noteworthy that a radio station should commission a new type of anti-intolerance "spots," a new series following the former excellent "Keep Faith with America" series which were broadcast over WNEW in the latter part of 1946 and have been currently heard on the schedules of 406 radio stations in the United States. The National Conference of Christians and Jews, the City College Radio Awards Committee, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Newspaper Guild, and other sources highly commended "Keep Faith with America." The Institute for Democratic Education, which participated with WNEW in that series, now again distributes the new series to radio stations throughout the country without cost.

A public service program is always in competition, of course, with the cleverest advertising techniques. WNEW, fully cognizant of this, engaged Hy Zaret and Lou Singer of Argosy Music Corporation to write a suite of one-minute musical "jingles" to be broadcast as public service spot announcements. These take advantage of the success of the singing commercial, but also partake both of the catchiness of Mother Goose rhymes and the appeal of folk music. Mr. Zaret and Mr. Singer played and sang for me "Brown Skinned Cow" (a little song on racial tolerance), "I've Got a Church," "Columbus Said—," "What Makes a Good American," "Close Your Eyes and Point Your Finger," "Traveling Broadens One," "I'm Proud to Be Me," and a number of others that were previewed at the Seventeenth Annual Institute for Education by Radio at Ohio State University and acclaimed by educators and broadcasters. Small wonder! Let me quote the opinion upon them of Louis Untermeyer, poet, anthologist, and parodist:

> These records are the most exciting things I have heard in years. What's more, they are news—good news. The very speed and condensation of the singing commercial offers an opportunity to drive home an idea—a technique which until now had been limited to soap and cigarettes. Now it *has* been done. "Little Songs on Big Subjects" [the title of the new series —W. R. B.] have all the immediate charm of a nursery rhyme and all the concentration of a musical commercial. These are inspired bits of melody in which the meaning becomes increasingly profound. They are "Mother Goose Songs of Democracy."

How much more worthwhile such "spot" material than any other sort! Truly this *is* "public service." It is also the highest form of American patriotism. My own hat is off to Mr. Zaret and Mr. Singer. Long may they wave! "Little Songs on Big Subjects" *is* the Bill of Rights set to music. Let's have more and more of this kind of warm, human, high-hearted work on the radio. The hatred, malice, and uncharitableness of racial prejudice will wither before it!

* * *

As to what Earle Walbridge calls "the frigidaire sweepstakes," C. Tyson Smith, of Amherst, Mass., submits:

> In connection with "the coldest line in English Poetry," I am surprised that no one has sent in those two magnificent lines from the 147th Psalm, which are certainly poetry of a sort:
>
> He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.
> He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?

And Dorothy Lee Richardson, of Ventnor, N. J., says:

> The quotation from Francis Thompson's "The Mistress of Vision" brought to my mind four beautiful lines from a modern poem, "What Is There?," which gets better every time I read it. It's from Ruth Pitter's book "The Bridge."
>
> And in the cold mountain the ptarmigan couches in snow,
> White upon white in the wild of the high Himalay,
> Where through the whiteness the rosy primulas grow,
> Banners of love in the stony dazzle of day.
>
> The accumulation of those cold "I" and "O" sounds has me practically shivering with delight, and of course the word "Himalay" is a poem in itself whether it's doing duty for Thompson or Pitter.

* * *

DISCOMPREHENSION

The negatives of English words
Conspire to baffle one:
Too few turn out predictably,
Too many turn out un-.

Of prefixes they take their choice
Unfettered and at will,
And some results are logical
But most are strangely il-.

The canny etymologists
Are seldom led astray.
To them each case looks typical,
To me each case looks a-.

What sliver of orthography
Is left for us to grab
When nowhere is normality
And everywhere is ab-?

DWIGHT CHAPMAN.

* * *

And so, wishing perfect June days to you! WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. "The Long Swim," by Norman Angell. 2. "Alice in Wonderland," by Lewis Carroll. 3. "David Copperfield," by Charles Dickens. 4. "The Count of Monte Cristo," by Alexandre Dumas. 5. "The Water-Babies," by Charles Kingsley. 6. "Horatius," by Thomas Macaulaey. 7. "Hero and Leander," by Marlowe and Chapman. 8. "Lochinvar," by Sir Walter Scott. 9. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," by Harriet Beecher Stowe. 10. "Huckleberry Finn," by Mark Twain.

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(Continued on page 50)

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PERSONALS

(Continued from page 49)

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 691

Reg. U. S. Patent Office

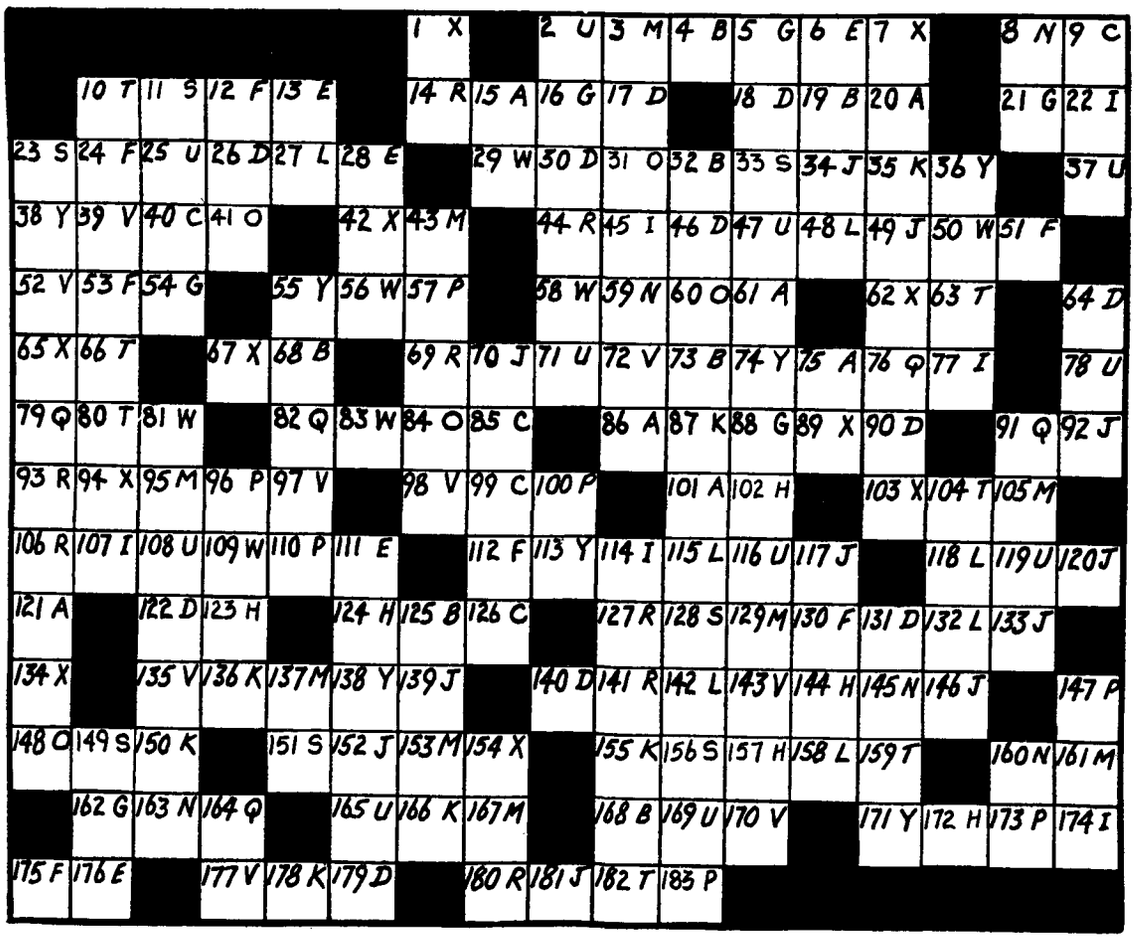
By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Verse satire by the Connecticut Wits in "The American Mercury," collected, 1807.	121 15 75 20 86 61 101
B. Somewhat hypoc ondriac (Colloq.).	19 73 4 168 32 68 125
C. English diplomat, translator of Plato, etc. (1490?-1546).	126 99 85 9 40
D. Series of essays by Augustine Birrell (1884, 1887, 1924).	122 140 30 18 26 179 90 131 46 17 64
E. American philosopher and educator (1859-; "School and Society").	111 6 13 28 176
F. Narrative by Don Marquis dramatized by him in 1922 (with "The").	53 175 51 112 12 24 130
G. Member of a dominant and military caste in Northern India.	54 16 21 5 88 162
H. Denoting, esp. in harp music, a deadening of tone by the hand (Music; Fr.).	144 124 128 157 123 102 172
I. A knocking, banging, or pounding noise (Colloq.).	174 114 107 77 22 45
J. "The Deacon's Masterpiece" (O. W. Holmes; 1858).	92 49 146 181 70 133 120 117 152 34 139
K. Pulitzer Prize play by Thornton Wilder (1938).	178 136 35 150 87 155 166
L. Family name of three current English writers.	27 48 115 118 132 158 142
M. Second satellite of Saturn (from innermost).	105 161 129 153 137 3 167 95 43
N. In Asgard the home of Vidar (Norse Myth).	145 160 8 163 59
O. A motor fuel with lead as its antiknock constituent.	84 60 148 41 31
P. Brother of Ophelia ("Hamlet").	100 173 96 57 147 110 183
Q. Fresh water fish allied to the dace and ide, noted for longevity.	82 164 76 91 79
R. A trace, vestige, smack, or suspicion.	180 44 93 69 14 106 127 141
S. One who makes a choice.	156 23 33 149 11 151
T. The doxology recited in the synagogue at the close of prayers (Jewish ritual).	10 80 66 159 182 63 104
U. Huge; ponderous; ungainly.	165 47 119 37 2 169 25 78 108 71 116
V. In the manner of the rabble.	39 143 135 72 97 98 52 177 170
W. One of the Twelve Apostles (Bib.).	29 56 109 81 83 50 58
X. State of being commensal (Biol.).	134 65 94 62 42 89 1 7 67 103 154
Y. Resembling or suggesting prattling.	113 55 38 171 74 138 36

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 38 of this issue.

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Why the Railroads Can't Afford NOT to Modernize!

A Dollars-and-cents Example That Will Interest Travelers, Labor and Investors

For a long time the C&O has said that America's railroads must modernize their passenger equipment—or forfeit a great opportunity.

In print and in private we have lampooned the "rolling tenements" that still pass for sleeping cars. We have stumped for modern streamlined trains to replace tired, creaking old day coaches. And over and over we have stated that, given attractive equipment, and new comforts and services, railroads could open the door on a new era of travel . . . *The C&O is replacing every old sleeping car, day coach and diner on its main lines, with streamlined cars.*

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Standpatters in the industry are still shaking their heads. But lately more reasonable people have been asking, "How can the large-scale replacement of old trains be practical?"

They point out that several of our largest systems had serious deficits in 1943. And everyone knows that the railroads are caught between rocketing costs and lagging rates. "How," they ask, "can such an industry afford large outlays for new equipment?"

The answer is that the railroads can't afford *not* to make these outlays. And here is a dollars-and-cents example:

The Investment That Is Fast Returning Its Cost

Last August one of the C&O Lines, the Pere Marquette, installed two new daytime streamliners—the last word in passenger attractiveness.

The new trains have carried 86% *more passengers* than old trains carried over the same route during the same period of the previous year—when traffic was still swollen by war emergencies.

Which will it be—modernization or continued deficits?

Here is the proof of the pudding: In less than 4 years, at the present rate, the *increase in passenger receipts* will equal the total cost of the trains!

Modern equipment is not a luxury that only a few fortunate systems, like the C&O, can afford. Even a bankrupt railroad can borrow money today to buy such equipment at 2% interest.

Which Way Do We Go?

Railroads now face a critical choice: If pessimist thinking, old-line practices and Toonerville equipment continue to be tolerated, then regardless of rate relief, further deficits and bankruptcies are certain.

But, if, on the other hand, these liabilities are replaced by modern ideas and modern trains, our railroads can again be a credit to our country. They can also be a bulwark of our national defense, which, as every citizen knows, depends on a flourishing transportation system.

The Chesapeake and Ohio Lines

Terminal Tower, Cleveland 1, Ohio

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